

THE COMMONWEAL

*A Weekly Review of Literature, The Arts
and Public Affairs*

Volume XVI

New York, Wednesday, May 11, 1932

Number 2

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Previous issues of THE COMMONWEAL are indexed in the *Reader's Guide* and the *Catholic Periodical Index*.
Published weekly and copyrighted 1932, in the United States by the Calvert Publishing Corporation, Grand Central
Terminal, New York, N. Y. United States: \$5.00; Foreign: \$6.00; Canada: \$5.50. Single Copies: \$.10.

OUR READERS RESPOND

WHEN we printed in this place last week our "appeal to our readers," we expressed our hope—indeed, our faith—that the response to it would be prompt and effective. Even although as we write there has only been time sufficient for the appeal to reach a small minority of our readers, we are happily able to report that our hope and our faith are being justified. Letters and telegrams and personal calls at our office have brought checks or pledges for contributions ranging from \$1.00 to \$500. Others send in new subscriptions for friends, or for a library, or for a foreign missionary. Priests have increased the size of their orders for THE COMMONWEAL, to be sold in church vestibules on Sundays. Other priests have strongly recommended the paper from their pulpits. Other friends who for many good reasons are not in a position to give immediate financial aid are promising such aid when their circumstances improve. Meanwhile, they are asking others to help us; in some cases organizing meetings for the purpose of obtaining new subscribers. In short, if the interest already displayed spreads throughout the whole body of our subscribers, and the members of The Calvert Associates, in anything like the measure displayed by the first group to respond to

our appeal, we shall not only surmount the immediate crisis which called forth that appeal, but we shall find our work established in a stronger position—supported by a larger body of readers—than at any time in our career.

Meanwhile, for the benefit of those who may not have read last week's appeal, or who have read it without a full appreciation of the facts it set forth, we shall briefly set forth those facts again. THE COMMONWEAL, like many other publications, has been so gravely affected by the current calamitous conditions that it has been forced squarely to face the question of whether it could possibly continue to exist. Its Board of Directors met on April 21 to decide that question. Having gradually accumulated a debt of \$17,000, and needing at least \$10,000 additional capital to carry us through 1932, our situation was most serious. Communicating these facts to a small number of readers known to be particularly interested, so many of them so promptly and generously replied that nearly \$7,000 were raised within a few days. This so enheartened us all that only a decision to go on with the work was possible. It was likewise decided to extend the appeal to the whole body of our readers and subscribers. The

general character of their response may best be told in the following excerpts from some of the letters now coming to this office in every mail.

"Though never in my life have I listened to so many appeals to help along good causes with less funds available, *THE COMMONWEAL* stands out in the list of those I must heed. It has been one of the joys of my life. Only a few days ago I called it in a letter I had occasion to write, the best Catholic magazine in the country—and then elaborated on the theme. Even the temporary suspension of *THE COMMONWEAL* would be a tragedy. Both Catholic and non-Catholic in this country need badly the qualities which it possesses: suavity, fairness, scholarship, courtesy and a capacity to impress and not antagonize the open-minded."

"How gladly would I respond to your appeal with a generous donation, but, instead, I have been obliged to borrow part of the money to pay my second tax installment. *THE COMMONWEAL* is a weekly joy to me, and certainly fills a much needed place in Catholic literature. I hope and pray that a way was found to surmount that difficulty. Oh! that the hearts of people having a superabundance of money could be touched to help! I have passed on your letter and spoken where I could, but my circle is limited and I am an old woman of eighty-four. May God help you."

"*THE COMMONWEAL* has met an urgent need in our Catholic life and it would be nothing less than a disaster for it to go out of existence. Those of us who live in the Middle West, surrounded by non-Catholics and by Catholics who are not very well informed, have found your discussions of current events exceedingly helpful and illuminating. It is my conviction that there is no more important work for all of us than the adequate presentation of Catholic doctrine in its relation to daily life, and this is your vocation. I wish that my enclosed check for \$50.00 were \$5,000."

"I am very sorry to hear that there is any possibility of having to discontinue the publication of *THE COMMONWEAL*. I feel that these past few years it has met one of the greatest needs of educated Catholics—and non-Catholics as well. I shall be glad to speak to a few people who might be able to contribute to the fund you are trying to raise, though I am afraid the contributions would necessarily be small ones. However, small sums mount up, and I am sure that all over the country your readers will be interested and eager to do what they can to preserve the existence of so splendid a publication. If you will send me some subscription blanks, we may be able to get more subscribers by speaking of *THE COMMONWEAL* in the school and among the Children of Mary."

"The Calvert Club of Chicago, carrying on this year with barely half the supporting membership of other years, and, as you know, composed of a group not blessed with earthly wealth, most of them weighed down by heavy obligations at this time, realize that they have but a meager offering for aid in this crisis. Yet such as it is, we send it to you, and can only say that

if our eagerness to help avert this catastrophe and our realization of the great loss to Catholic letters and the prestige of our great heritage, the Faith, could by some blessed alchemy be changed into dollars, then the sum herewith would be written with three more zeros. Some of the members state they will send small personal contributions at least, and we hope later on to find some way to be of further assistance."

"I am grieved to think that the situation you are facing is so disturbing and menacing, and I hope that your effort to awaken the conscience of those from whom help should come will bring response to your appeal and support of the meritorious work you are doing. Catholic journalism has been developed and exalted by *THE COMMONWEAL* which has won an enviable place in the magazine and healthy literature of the country, and I should be exceedingly sorry to see misfortune befall it."

"I think so well of *THE COMMONWEAL* that its cessation of publication would cause me profound sorrow; even the possibility is disturbing. If I were able I would gladly pay the whole indebtedness. Heartiest congratulations and gratitude for what you have already done for religion, and my assurance that I will do everything possible to enable you to continue publication."

"I am pleased to subscribe \$1,000 toward the maintenance of *THE COMMONWEAL*, because I believe that it is doing an exceptionally good piece of work toward the better understanding of our faith and the principles of Catholic Action, which will contribute to the general, moral and social welfare of the nation."

"I have not the gift of persuasiveness so I cannot talk to others—but *THE COMMONWEAL* talks for itself. Your subscribers will surely all stand by you. My bank account is sadly anaemic after the strain of the winter, but write to me in July and ask me for \$500. And next year write me again. I think I can dig it up, and to no one would I give it more gladly, for faith in the gorgeous piece of work you are doing."

"It is a keen grief to me that I am unable to give more substantial aid to *THE COMMONWEAL*. The paper is such a satisfaction and necessity to me that I dread its possible cessation. Practically, I can do little more than to promise to continue my yearly subscription of \$50.00, that is for 1932 and 1933. At this juncture I will agree to send you forthwith the \$100 covering that promise. I hardly know how to face Monday mornings without the anticipated *COMMONWEAL*. I have been buying extra copies at our church door to send to my non-Catholic friends."

"I am deeply distressed by the news in your letter about *THE COMMONWEAL*'s financial condition. You are doing a most wonderful work for the Church, filling so splendidly the long-felt need of a cultured Catholic layman's weekly, it would indeed be a calamity to many of us if you really had to suspend. After May 1 I will send you \$50.00 and a like amount in the fall—and again the next year will do the same. I can never tell how grateful and appreciative I am for what you

have already done, and I cannot believe that the Catholic gentlemen of this country would let THE COMMONWEAL die for lack of support in this crisis."

"I will be very glad to help you in any way that I can, and if you have any definite ideas in which I might be useful to you I wish that you would send them along. As you know, I have been long interested in the character and quality which you have maintained in THE COMMONWEAL, and I think that it would be a decided loss to the community to have a magazine of such integrity and high critical standards disappear because of a temporary condition which is affecting all business. You can depend upon my full coöperation."

"Having read your appeal to your readers this morning, my son and I enclose our checks to help in a slight way the deficit, and I include in mine a subscription to THE COMMONWEAL. I can imagine few happenings more to be regretted in the general life of America today than the cessation of THE COMMONWEAL as a weekly paper. Its poise, its conviction and its spirit lift it entirely above any other paper that I know—and while I am a member of another communion, I should immensely regret its loss."

We have space only for a few of the letters and extracts from letters which have poured into our office as if on the wings of a wind of new hope and fresh life—as if springing out of the heart of Eastertide itself. Not that we are yet safely past the shoals and rocks of our crisis—we are not; there is still by far the larger part of our deficit to be overcome. But surely, you, our readers who have not as yet responded, will be inspired by the example of those who have. In that case, a new lease of life—or rather a lease of new life—will be granted to us, and we of THE COMMONWEAL would rededicate ourselves to our part in that crusade of Catholic Action which the nation and the world so greatly needs today.

WEEK BY WEEK

IT HAS been an exciting week. First came the bitter campaign waged against Governor Roosevelt as a candidate for the Democratic nomination in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania. The first event had been quite generally expected, but the overwhelming endorsement given Mr. Smith came as a surprise and did a great deal of damage to the Roosevelt cause. It was as if a man, having read the weather reports, went a-fishing prepared for a mild shower and then encountered a tornado and a cloudburst. According to the *New York Times*, Governor Roosevelt should have waged no battle in Massachusetts. That kind of advice is more easily given than accepted. The attitude of these two candidates toward each other is such that scrapping it out everywhere seems inevitable. In Pennsylvania Smith forces likewise mustered a great deal more support than had been anticipated. Though Mr. Roosevelt emerged with a

victory, the many charms of his strong opponent were endorsed by such a multitude of citizens that "Smith feeling" throughout the country will surely be encouraged. In general, then, the outlook in Democracy seems far more hazy than was the case when Mr. Thompson wrote the very interesting paper which appears in this issue of THE COMMONWEAL.

ON ALL other fronts, there has been a decided change for the worse. First of all, the manifest unwillingness of M. Tardieu to act on either armament or financial problems before the French people have voted in the impending elections has brought the disarmament conferences to a disgraceful halt, and has once more fatefully postponed the discussion of war debts and other economic problems. Mr. Stimson's mission to Europe will therefore necessarily end in bitter disappointment. Elsewhere throughout the world, notably at Shanghai, storm clouds are once more well above the horizon. At Washington the powers that be continue to wrestle with what seems a never-ceasing taxation difficulty. Speaking at Richmond, Virginia, Mr. Hoover offered the nation's assembled governors a very striking picture of mounting costs of government and of taxation burdens out of all proportion to earning power. But in Washington the debate drags ominously on and on. The latest development is that the House, in a chaotic moment, not merely overrode the President's furlough plan (by which every federal employee was to be offered a month's vacation without pay), but changed all the proposed economy measures. This is a most discouraging bit of news, because the budget-balancing operations must be completed before any other plans can even be entertained.

WE COMMENTED recently on a census of high-school age young people, taken in England and the United States, to determine whether the war movies encouraged a romantic attitude toward war—an attitude commonly considered natural at such an age—or whether the mucking around in trenches

The Facts of War

and shell holes and the mutilation and dying were depicted with a realism sufficient to make the young ideas appreciate that war *per se*, divorced from the justifications for war, is not a happy antidote to the monotonies of civilian life. As reported, the vote was overwhelmingly for peace, which we esteemed solid accomplishment for an entertainment business often accused of trifling. At the same time, we referred to the gruesome photographs of the real thing which our Army Signal Corps collected and which are rarely permitted to emerge from the official files. Now comes along a little book, published in this country by Brewer, Warren and Putnam, and called "The Horror of It," a collection of photographs which we believe should be the final and sufficient brief to convince any sane person who does not know war at first hand how he ought to be disposed toward it. There are causes, of course, for

which one should be willing to suffer and to give one's life; this, however, does not alter the fact of the abysmal bestiality of warfare, or that the suppression of war as a means of settling international differences is eminently deserving of the best efforts of the best minds that can be devoted to it. Those who have a weak stomach or delicate nerves, we warn to approach the book tentatively. Small and innocuous-looking though it may be from the outside, it is really ghastly. Those sanguine and exuberant persons who resent having the glory of war impugned, we challenge to have a look at the book; it will give new direction to their forces.

THE OLD query regarding public defense of morals reappears in the sharp attack launched against burlesque theatres in the heart of New York City. Forty-second Street west of Times Square is not the classiest of Gotham thoroughfares. It slopes gradually and a little dejectedly toward the

river front, where steamship piers and hot dog counters create the usual harbor atmosphere. Nevertheless the district was until recently notable chiefly for legitimate theatres, interesting cut-price shops where anything from Shakespeare sets to umbrellas are sold at a reduction, and churches. One of the old convents of Manhattan is situated in this neighborhood. Recently burlesque has invaded the region. At first it seems to have been pretty mild stuff, which brought to the footlights a multitude of men and women just a little under the par fixed by the managers of musical comedy and vaudeville. But little by little the quality deteriorated, until the obscenity of the spectacle offered is most evident to the nostrils. The testimony offered on this subject by clergymen, social workers and police at recent official hearings is unanimous and pertinent. Periods of acute unemployment, which throw crowds of men into the streets with nothing to do, invariably tend to start a boom in gross and lascivious entertainment. All cities throughout the world know the problem. It should be fairly easy for New York to quash this abuse, though of course the difficulties of providing work and interests for the patrons are tremendous.

THERE are heartening doings in Wilmington, as we learn from Mother Mary Agatha, O.S.U.—a name pleasantly familiar to THE COMMONWEAL's library-minded readers. The graduates of the Ursuline Academy there have been anxious to enlist in some form of Catholic Action which will carry beyond the school walls the traditions learnt within them; they have also developed a particular enthusiasm for the work and purpose of the Calvert Associates. Combining these two motives, they are launching, with the approval of Bishop Fitzmaurice, a carefully planned organization to be called the "Calvert Library." The Catholic Book-of-the-Month choices, the volumes of the Calvert Series, Cardinal Hayes's

Committee lists, and a gleaning of other publications under guidance, will constitute the nucleus of a circulating library to be made available throughout the diocese. Every parish is represented in the original group backing the project, and each representative will work actively in her own division, spreading alike a knowledge of superior literature and a knowledge of the spirit and undertakings of The Calvert Associates. Best item of all, perhaps, in a practical world, the plan is no longer in the blueprint stage; the constitution is already functioning, the officers are elected, the membership blanks are printed—and Mother Agatha and her group begin with a well-stocked library actually in hand. This is all a splendid proof of youthful Catholic idealism and mettle. We understand that the Ursuline undergraduates are very active in the Catholic Youth Movement founded by Father Lord. He must be as proud of his share in the original impetus of this undertaking as The Calvert Associates are of attracting its loyalty.

THE RECENT plea of Dr. Abraham Flexner for the undiminished maintenance of our higher branches of education, even in the face of present difficulties, has for the socially taught an important current application. Fordham University's School of Sociology and Social Service has just sent out its seasonal report, together with a letter requesting financial aid: and the content of the first, coupled with the tone of the second, should, it seems to us, elicit a willing and generous response from every solvent recipient who has any knowledge at all of modern social problems. This is not the place to trace the school's steady increase in enrolment, faculty and equipment since it was founded a few years ago to form expert Catholic workers for the field of general social welfare. Suffice it to say that about five hundred now attend, more than a fourth of them regular Institute students. There is, besides, a satisfactory and expanding record of service by graduates, of contacts opened, conferences conducted and research completed, both here and abroad, as well as a steady increase in reputation: Miss Rose J. McHugh, the school's director of field work and formerly consultant in Child Care Progress for the United States insular possessions, will deliver, on invitation, a monograph on "Catholic Family Social Work" at the Second International Conference of Social Work in Frankfort-am-Main, in July; and Miss Mary L. Gibbons, a 1921 graduate, and a member of the faculty since 1924, is director of the city's Home Relief Bureau, loaned for that purpose by Catholic Charities.

FOLLOWING the outline of the year's work, the financial memorandum is simple and significant: "During this period of unemployment, the slogan 'Keep the Young Folks at School' is sharply impelling poor students to seek admission at our door. The school has given bountifully to college graduates who are anxious

to engage in social work and anxious to help others, yet ill-provided to help themselves. It receives little from tuition and spends much for staff, faculty, floor space and other running expenses." The anticipated deficit at the end of the school year is \$15,000—the difference between the total income of \$26,000 and the running expenses of \$41,000. In the distorting perspective of hard times, the sum may seem large; but the fact remains that, in proportion to the solid good achieved, as well as by the standards normally prevailing in the field of our great American educational foundations, it is small, almost nominal. Among Catholics, in particular, it should be felt as unthinkable that the greater part of the money should not be raised, and raised promptly enough to enable the school to go uncrippled into its next year.

THE SENATE committee which over a year ago undertook to study unemployment insurance, has after considering all existing systems and theories, finally agreed on recommending that state governments should make unemployment insurance compulsory. This was announced by Senator Hebert of Rhode Island, chairman of the committee, immediately after Senator Robert F. Wagner had made a report to the Senate of his individual views. It may be recalled that a year ago, Senator Hebert was made chairman of the committee upon pressure from the White House, although Senator Wagner under Senate traditions was entitled to the chairmanship, and this further recalls the administration's rôle in scuttling Senator Wagner's bill for a nation-wide employment service when the need for this had been urged by practically every responsible authority on the subject in the country, and particularly by the spokesmen for labor.

SENATOR WAGNER, in short, by assuming to do something in the way of social legislation seems to be a constant annoyance, and a cause of haste and breathlessness, to those who would rather do nothing and just hope against hope that prosperity is around the corner. The present agreement of the committee is therefore especially significant as it undoubtedly represents a compromise on the subject of unemployment insurance which will be acceptable to the worried stand-patters as well as to the progressives, regardless of party labels. Compulsory insurance, Senator Wagner emphasized, does not mean that the state must either operate or contribute to the insurance system. It simply provides that employers shall be under statutory obligation to build up reserves against a stated period of unemployment. The legal compulsion is considered necessary in order to protect the employer who should make such provision from unfair competition with those who would not. Though this is only a step along the way, we believe it is a notable one and that the developments will be of marked importance in the social history of our times.

COÖPERATION AND THE FUTURE

THAT the only possible alternative to a strong, temperate and realistic coöperation between nations is a system of air-tight national compartments, each of which would be a virtual state monopoly, must be clear to nearly everyone. During the past two weeks further evidences of tariff tightening have been received. Among these the most spectacular are certainly the precipitate decline in French export trade and the fixing of still higher customs rates by Great Britain. In this respect the United States has been obviously the marshal of the day. Whether we want the ceremonies to proceed further is an important question, but not one which is likely to be answered conclusively in the near future.

The curious factor in the American conception of international affairs during the past decade has undoubtedly been this: the idealists offered immense quantities of cream puffs which the opportunists then brushed off the platter. Nowhere else and at no time in history did so many societies interested in one or the other aspect of internationalism appear. One supposes that no small part of the revenues accruing to the telegraph and cable companies were earned through telegrams dispatched hither and thither by earnest secretaries on behalf of some equally earnest society which desired to "bring the force of public opinion" to bear upon those who were presumed to be in charge of ironing out international disagreements. On the other hand, however, the business and financial leadership of the nation underwrote an isolationist policy. This included certain unprecedented things. It said that the United States could become banker to the world without subscribing to a belief in relative free trade. It opined that what were virtually political loans to other countries could be safely disbursed without political guarantees of any kind.

Thus the problem confronting our time is a three-fold one. The content of idealism must be clarified, first of all. No sound thinking about international realities can thrive in an atmosphere of boundless moralizing, dreaming and supposing. Second, the economic and political tasks which the governments of the world have to face in concert must evoke a sound regard for the rules of the game. The figure of the "international banker" evoked during the twelve years following the war has turned out to be a silly mirage. International finance is an obvious necessity, but it must become international, which means more than a consortium of glib United States bond salesmen and a handful of gamblers. And the third necessity is an orderly unification of sound idealism and practical work.

All three, one thinks, present unusual opportunities to properly equipped young people. The trouble with American idealism has been its "feeling"—its hyper-sentimental irreality, created no doubt by the emotions of the war years. Young people not unsettled by those

emotions and trained instead by the hard experience of the present ought to be in a better position to see things as they are. To them also has been given the advantage of a greatly improved knowledge of facts. It is only very recently that more than a handful of Americans began to study the foreign scene from an American point of view. Earlier we had large immigrant groups who were familiar with this and that part of Europe and sentimentally attached to it, or we had a small number of diplomats and students whose discussion of foreign affairs was largely restricted to their own narrow circle. At present the availability of first-rate knowledge—which is not always so-called “expert” knowledge—is a noticeable phenomenon.

In view of the importance of the subject, upon the right understanding of which the future may in large measure depend, we think it imperative to begin purposefully and intelligently to educate young people to think internationally. The right starting point is obviously not the repudiation of their own country. With his nation every man has to live, and only through it can he hope to share in the molding of world affairs. The boy or girl should, however, be made to see clearly that the object of studying “mankind” is the enrichment of American life. No single country possesses the fulness of all tradition, makes every single product in the best possible way, or develops institutions of the greatest value. Youth can, therefore, be made to learn the importance of comparing and understanding. For Catholics this process ought to be relatively easy. The nature of the Church itself, or the drift of Christian teaching, is clearly something that transcends national limitations. And yet it too frequently happens that, in a spirit of proving their patriotic fervor, groups of Catholics act as if they were committed by their very faith to noisy and precipitate chauvinism.

Could education not undertake to train our young people in “seeing” what their fellows in other countries are like? Might not this “insight” spur them on to correct inevitable defects in their own outlook, without robbing them of any already acquired grace or trait of value? For example, the American has a “splendid carelessness” which is unmistakable: he possesses a certain elasticity of mind and heart, a certain swinging gait, a certain cheerful venturesomeness, which the rest of the world admires and sometimes even tries to imitate. On the other hand, however, the American is lacking in the proper kind of earnestness. He can, to be sure, be very serious about things—but seldom serious enough. The European, particularly the Frenchman and the German, has learned to work much harder than we do, qualitatively speaking. It annoys many folk across the water to discover the American breezily palming off as knowledge or skill some rather infantile intellectual act which apparently symbolizes a deep-seated indifference to thinking.

More specifically, however, the art of comprehending and solving world problems can be acquired only by a

generation which has learned how to make adequate comparisons. Thus the American usually takes for granted that his form of government is the best on earth, and not infrequently attributes a form of idiocy to countries which adopt other forms. Of course the American form of government is a very good thing, indeed; but one who is too entirely satisfied with it may easily overlook its weaknesses. Why not encourage boys and girls to look into the matter cautiously and a bit objectively? The government of the United States is automatic. If the Republican party makes things hotter than we like, we simply turn it off and wait until the Democratic party makes things too cold. Our system is curiously like steam heat plus a ventilating device. The most remarkable thing about it is the fact that it has worked so well, exacting of public opinion a modicum of attention and care. In a way the government is the greatest American invention. But like all automatic systems, it lacks responsiveness to the human touch. Leadership of the valuable personal kind is difficult to summon forth in the United States, and even when it is obtained it does not always prove satisfactory.

The average European government suffers from the contrary weakness. Like so much else abroad—house-keeping, handicraft, teaching—the state “feels human” but is thereby often exposed to dangers which confront all businesses in which the “personal touch” predominates. In countries like France, Germany and Spain the clash between individuals sometimes well-nigh halts the progress of government. As a result the current drift toward dictatorships, as temporary substitutes for the unpopular monarchical idea, is no doubt inevitable. The Germans are still nominally governed with the consent of public opinion, but a virtual dictatorship is the fruit of such spectacular bids for personal popularity as that offered by Herr Hitler. To understand a little of the background which makes a silhouette of existing conditions is surely far better than offering—or swallowing—ready-made abstract judgments about them.

This is, of course, only an example. Nevertheless it is, we think, a valuable example in so far as it indicates the kind of work to be done if America is ever to think of international affairs objectively. Countless citizens now go to bed worrying about such alleged truths as the unpopularity of Americans throughout the world, or the impending Russification of human society. Other groups conjure up visions of war-debt-owing peoples, endowed with a chronic dislike for paying off their honest obligations. All these states of mind are mirages, as regrettable and misleading as any will-o'-the-wisp. One cannot, however, easily contravert them with simple denials. What must come to pass is that respect for the facts in the case, plus ability to see facts in their natural, normal human setting, is made an objective of education which alone can prepare the modern man for life in the world which now seems so problematical and threatened with disaster.

MAKING THE ISSUES OF 1932

By CHARLES WILLIS THOMPSON

FOR THE next few months, "unless all signs fail"—the favorite precautionary phrase of all political dopesters—the campaign for the Presidency is to be one of shadow-boxing, or of feinting to a finish. At the outset we can dismiss the Republican party from our consideration, since

nothing remains but the renomination of Mr. Hoover and a platform which will be a nine days' topic and will then be dust-heaped by his speech of acceptance. The campaign of 1932, until June anyway, is solely a Democratic concern.

There are issues aplenty, but they are shadow-boxed. The few candidates who are willing to take a decided position have no chance of the nomination—except those who are only nominally fighting for the nomination, and really fighting for local power, and they are not far from the same boat. The campaign—and remember, it is only the Democratic campaign, for the Republicans will not really enter the lists until Hoover is renominated in June—is one of sidestepping, wary adroitness, pussy-footedness, except so far as two or three men are concerned who will not be nominated.

Until this year, anybody would have said that the overshadowing issue would be prohibition. It will still play a large part, but the hard times—or "financial depression," as linguistic aesthetes choose to paraphrase the seasoned and sanctioned locution—have come to dominate the minds of all men, and of course will dominate the campaign as they do all other disputations. Up to 1932, the only phase of this question that was ever heard of among politicians was that of taxation; lately the ideas of economy and retrenchment have been forced upon them, and those ideas will loom increasingly larger in the campaign from June to November—perhaps ultimately taking most of the limelight. On this issue, as on all others, the attitude of the candidates is one of confusion and caution. There are so many antagonistic interests to be conciliated that no candidate wants to sound a bugle, except those who are temperamentally inclined that way and who therefore will not be nominated.

To avoid miscomprehension, the prohibition question will be considered in this article, but the question of ways and means comes first, as it does in the engrossment of the man in the street.

First, the candidates and not the platforms make the issues. This is not yet recognized, but it will be. Formerly the candidate "stood on the platform." Nowadays the platform stands where the candidate

The following paper is the first of a projected series of articles on political issues during the campaign. While THE COMMONWEAL is not pledged to agree with any conclusion put forward by its correspondent, it has sufficient faith in the experience and judgment of Mr. Thompson to sponsor his declarations as informative and well considered. In the present instance we may add that the accompanying article was written a few days before the election results in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania, commented on elsewhere in this issue, were available.—The Editors.

puts it. That there may be no tiresome list of instances, two or three illustrations will serve. In the last election, then, the Democratic platform sidestepped the question of prohibition, but Governor Smith's telegram, read to the convention just before it adjourned, relegated the platform declaration to

the background and it was heard of no more. The Republican platform of 1916 was never heard of after Justice Hughes's speech of acceptance. The Democratic platform of 1904 dodged the silver question, but a telegram from the candidate, Judge Parker, declaring himself a gold man, obliterated the platform. And so on; there is no use multiplying proofs.

On the subject of hard times, the Democratic line of attack and hope of victory is based merely on discontent. No candidate has so far offered anything constructive; one and all, so far as any of them speak, they are only capitalizing discontent and saying, "We could do better if we held the offices," without saying how. Governor Roosevelt's essay in that line, his "forgotten man" speech over the radio, was a boomerang, and would have been one without George V. McLaughlin's prompt disproof of its chief allegation. Governor Murray sought to capitalize the discontent of the farmers, but offered nothing tangible, and it was the farmers who settled his hash in the North Dakota primary.

In Congress, the slim Democratic majority in the House has exhibited no more capacity for remedy than the nominal Republican minority, and that is saying a great deal. Each party has had its eye not on the national welfare, but on the probable effect of a vote on some bill in the particular district each congressman represents. As this article is concerned with candidates—the issue-makers—what Congress may do or not do may seem irrelevant, but in the six months preceding the conventions it has been the custom for Congress to make the path of the candidates easy by tentatively shaping issues, and this year it has not done so. A few leaders seem to have a program, if not a policy, but they are seldom able to count on their followers, each "follower" alarmed about the effect on his personal fortunes in his own district.

The government has been collecting taxes as if it were poor, and spending the proceeds as if it were rich. With one hand it is a beggar, with the other it is a spendthrift. All the efforts of such men as Mr. Garner, Mr. Snell and Mr. Crisp are insufficient to restrain it. Mr. Hoover deserves credit for demanding that the

government should not only collect taxes but use economy in expending what it gets, but he did not demand it before the common man everywhere had become outspokenly querulous under heavy taxation and riotous spending. On this monumental matter no candidate has anything to say but generalities, except Mr. Hoover, and he only began talking about particulars after everybody else had talked about government prodigality, and when he did, his proposals were far short of the mark.

As for the candidates—and the candidates, not the platforms, make the issues from June to November—no candidate in either party has had anything decisive to say except Governor Ritchie and ex-Governor Smith, neither of whom will be the nominee. If Governor Roosevelt is not nominated, it is inconceivable that any of the candidates against him will be. The mention of their names is sufficient to show that none of them can ever command the necessary two-thirds vote—Governor Murray, ex-Governor Byrd, Speaker Garner, Senator Lewis and the other “favorite sons.” If Roosevelt is not the nominee, the nominee—and issue-maker—will be someone who is not an avowed candidate, presumably Newton D. Baker. Mr. Baker’s contributions to the intellectual treasury of the public mind have been of even less weight than Mr. Roosevelt’s. He is for our entry into international partnership and, lately, in favor of boycotting Japan to some extent because she bombarded Shanghai, but the election of 1932 will not be decided on such issues.

On the Republican side, though Mr. Hoover has recently awakened to the need of economy and has been pretty forceful about it, his three years of administration fail to show anything that can be called a policy concerning anything else. Even on that question, his awakening has been so belated as to rouse a suspicion that it was suggested to him. There is no Republican candidate against him, despite Governor Pinchot’s romantic dreams, and that nomination is foreclosed. Some of the Wisconsin delegates will please themselves by voting for Senator Norris, and a few scattering protest votes for other names will be forgotten when, at the end of the first ballot, someone moves to make Mr. Hoover’s nomination unanimous.

On prohibition, the outlook is for platform planks that will be moister than heretofore, but not wet. Kansas, the South, and some Western states have to be considered, because they have electoral votes. But the issues will be made in the speeches of acceptance, and this applies to prohibition as to everything else. It is certain—eliminating Mr. Smith and Mr. Ritchie—that the two candidates will be no wetter than the two platforms. Mr. Hoover is quoted incessantly as calling prohibition a “noble experiment,” but he did not say anything so melodramatic; he called it an experiment “noble in purpose,” which is true enough and perfectly innocuous, even though the “noble” purpose was not realized.

Mr. Roosevelt, who is most likely to be his opponent,

has sufficiently demonstrated, not solely by his St. Paul speech, but by his consistent course ever since he became a candidate, that his strategy is to make no enemies. Naturally this applies to the prohibition issue as well as to all others. So far, he has been just wet enough, but not too wet. It should never be forgotten by Northern city-dwellers, who find it hard to imagine a mental environment different from their own, that the normal electoral strength of the Democratic party is largely in dry states. It is irrelevant to say that the South is not really dry, for whether it is dry or not in practice, it is dry at the ballot-box. Mr. Roosevelt piled up his early lead in dry states, and has a backbone of prohibition delegates, Georgia being for the purposes of his campaign his “home state” rather than New York. In Wisconsin he said he was “wet,” but the driest of his dry supporters gave no sign of being offended.

There will be much yammering concerning the form which the variably moist planks of the two parties will take. “Resubmission” and “referendum” are words much in the air just now, and, led by such dries as ex-Governor Byrd, a surprising amount of willingness is being manifested to satisfy the wets by comfortable phraseology. Heretofore phraseology has been a sticking point with the dries, and so something has been gained by the wets. On the Republican side there has not yet been quite so much concession, but there has been enough, as in Secretary Hyde’s declaration, to promise a less uncompromising attitude when the resolutions come to be threshed out at the convention. After the conventions and the hullabaloo, it cannot be repeated too often, the platforms will recede before the utterances of the candidates, and the issues will be personified in them. On this matter of prohibition, Mr. Roosevelt gives every sign of being just moist enough, and while Mr. Hoover will remain dry, the latitude he gives to his Cabinet is only one sign out of many that his dryness will not be so pronounced as to offend any wet supporters who do not want to be offended.

Mr. Roosevelt’s name is here bracketed with Mr. Hoover’s because other Democratic candidates need not be considered, unless a certain factor which has been silently potent but not mentioned becomes prominent enough to affect his chances. That is that the real ground of such Democratic opposition as there is to Mr. Roosevelt is a distrust of his presidential qualifications. It is a thing so hard to define that no one has come out with it, but it is all there is to the “stop-Roosevelt” sentiment. The same feeling was the gravamen of the “stop-Hoover” sentiment in the Republican party four years ago, but it could not be defined and was not stated, and Hoover was nominated. There did not seem to be anything against him. History should repeat itself in Mr. Roosevelt’s case, and the only chance that it will not do so rests in the possibility that Mr. Roosevelt himself may extend this distrust beyond the minds of the comparatively few into the minds of many. Some of his utterances have unmis-

takably tended to rouse a feeling of uneasiness, or at least of doubt, among men who have hitherto taken him for granted. But such a possibility is not to be reckoned as a menace, and would not be mentioned at all if Mr. Roosevelt had the advantage of possessing wise counsellors, who would prevent him from saying things of a nature dangerous to his candidacy. Mr. Hoover had such counsellors in 1928, which is why his aspirations were so much more successful than when he did not have them, in 1920.

Returning to issues, we have a cause for thanksgiving in this campaign, which is that the tariff seems to be no longer a political issue. It never should have been. Both parties, without saying so, have come quietly, in Congress and out, to act on the great truth enunciated by General Hancock in 1880—that “the tariff is a local issue.” It is. And it is curious to reflect that, in those benighted days, Hancock was derided for saying it, and that, since the election was close, it probably contributed to his defeat.

BLACK GENIUS

By ERNEST SEEMAN

NO SINCERE student of personality can long be satisfied to assume that talent is the monopoly of any one race. For while such values as lands, chattels and civil and social privilege have throughout history been quite casually preempted by dominant racial clans or color-groups, it is a significant psychological fact that under equal warmth of opportunity any branch of mankind's family tree is capable of an amazing release of creative fruitage. The Caucasian species of the genus *homo* has thus far enjoyed an overwhelming advantage over the Ethiopian, but that there is contained in the blood, bones or skin of fairer peoples any inherent pattern of superior genius is a presumption that is becoming more and more untenable.

It might be well for us proud Celts and Saxons to remember that not so many centuries ago our crude forefathers were struggling upward with just the same naive outlook that today characterizes the cultural efforts of an African bushman. That, as Julian Huxley observes, “None of the great human inventions which we miss in Africa—plow, wheel, alphabet, or stone architecture—was the work of the so-called Nordic, or even of a European, race.” And to remember likewise that the descendants of the 246,000,000 black population now inhabiting the earth are, if they continue in existence, bound to develop intellectually by much the same process as have we.

As an interesting and generally overlooked fact, it is to be noted that a large proportion of the intellectual and artistic achievers of the colored race have been the blackest of black men and women; a fact which of itself should invalidate the popular notion that only from the white infusion flowing in the veins of mulattoes has nature been able to extract any of the ingredients of genius or personal power.

No less a statesman than John C. Calhoun once voiced this erroneous notion on the floor of the United States Senate. “Show me a Negro,” said he, “who can extract a Greek root, and I will agree that the slaves should be liberated.”

That remark of Senator Calhoun's constituted, in the mind of President Witherspoon of Princeton, a

challenge to his own broad concept of educational potentialities; and he set about performing an experiment that should forever prove mentality to rest on deeper and more subtle circumstances than the hue of a man's skin. Taking under his charge an ordinary and very black boy of eighteen years, Dr. Witherspoon grounded him in the elementary studies, put him through private training in his own home, then sent him through William and Mary College. And when that black boy, John Chavis, returned home to North Carolina an enlightened and accomplished scholar, he was not only able to extract Greek roots to the perfect satisfaction of the president of the state university, but was employed as a preacher by Orange Presbytery. Subsequently he became a teacher, and in this capacity instructed for many years the sons and daughters of some of the most aristocratic white families of the old North State.

In the field of music, the Negro is generally acknowledged to possess a certain natural aptitude. But in the popular mind, this has been but hazily associated with the idea of creative genius. Nevertheless, the black man has been responsible for practically every unique musical movement springing from American soil. His inexhaustible wealth of folk-lore, legends and songs has, besides vastly enriching our literature, given the world a musical motif as bizarre and colorful as that contributed by the peasantry of Russia or the gypsies of Hungary. His spirituals and slave songs are genuine, inimitable and overflowing with profound emotional power; and the “cake walk,” “ragtime,” “tango,” originated by Argentinian Negroes, “blues,” and “jazz” (the very name of the latter commemorating the genius of a Negro band leader, Jasbo Brown) are expressions of the black man's creative ability which have, each in its turn, achieved world-wide popularity.

In every division of music, from work-song to opera, Negro composers have distinguished themselves. Such universally sung melodies as “Carry Me Back to Old Virginia” and “Listen to the Mocking Bird” were originated by Negroes: the first by James Bland, the latter by Richard Milburn, a Philadelphia barber.

"Way Down upon the Suwanee River," although fully credited to Stephen Foster, a white composer, was adapted by him from the plaintive chant of an Alabama slave woman who had been sold away from her home and family in Florida. The songs, operas and chamber-music of such modern masters of harmony as Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, Harry T. Burleigh and J. Rosamond Johnson have gained international recognition and renown.

Turning to sculpture, until recently we were unaware of the vast amount of artistic wealth to be found among the blacks of Central Africa: in the Cameroun, Uele, Kasai, Bushongo and along the Ivory Coast, where the sculptor's art has been, perhaps, most primitive and most hugely creative. French connoisseurs have readily grasped the significance of the Negro statues and have favorably compared them, for artistic merit, with the sculpture of the classic Greeks. The work of the ancient Negro savage, they contend, has played a rôle no less important for our age than did classic art in inspiring the Renaissance. That the African primitive school has powerfully influenced most of the creators now accepted as leaders in contemporary sculpture, painting, music, poetry and the drama is an obvious fact.

Another interesting refinement of primitive African sculpture has recently come to light in South America. Deep in the jungles of Dutch Guiana live the Bush Negroes or Djukas. They are descended from West African slaves who revolted against their masters, the Dutch colonial sugar planters, as early as 1650. The Djukas are unique; for in the civilization which they have established in the almost impenetrable tropical forest, they have borrowed little from the white man or Indian, but have kept alive, among other West African culture, the art of wood-carving; and this branch of sculpture they have developed to the most exquisite degree of plasticity and grace.

Several American Negroes have achieved high rank as sculptors. As early as 1865 the work of Edmonia Lewis was attracting attention in the artistic world, and at the Philadelphia Exposition in 1876 her "Death of Cleopatra" received sensational acclaim. One of Rodin's most brilliant pupils was Meta Vaux Warrick, a young Negro woman from Pennsylvania. Her masterpiece, "The Wretched," was first exhibited at Paris in 1903. Also her work was a striking group at the Jamestown Tercentennial, representing the advancement of the Negro in America since his introduction as a slave.

The Negro has also revealed much ability in the field of painting. Velasquez, in the seventeenth century, was aware of the black man's sensitivity to form and color, and with true artist's insight undertook to train to the palette one of his young slaves, Juan de Pareja. That this experiment bore rich results is attested by the fact that Pareja's "Calling of Saint Matthew" is today treasured in the Spanish National Museum; his "Capuchin" was one of the most highly

prized paintings of the royal family of Russia; and his mural, "Saint John," is the outstanding artistic feature of the Chapel of Santa Rita in the Recoletos of Madrid.

Among modern Negro painters, Henry Tanner has won high distinction in Parisian art circles, the French government having purchased several of his canvases for the Luxembourg Gallery. His favorite themes are scriptural, and his "Christ Walking on the Sea" is one of his best known works. The paintings of William Harper and William Edward Scott also rank with the best productions of the modern American school. Mr. Harper, before his early and untimely death, received a number of prizes at the Chicago Art Institute and the Julian Academy in Paris; and the Argentine Republic has recently purchased Mr. Scott's "La Pauvre Voisine." The latter artist has also completed some unique mural paintings for public buildings, particularly in Chicago. The paintings "Syncopation" and "Mulattress," by Archibald Motley, jr., recently won several medals and money prizes at the Chicago Artists' Exhibition; while "Memories of Warrenton, Virginia," by John T. Haitstalk, received first attention in an exhibit in New York at the Russell Galleries, despite the fact that there were offered a drawing by Sargent and oils by other famous artists. Incidentally, it is interesting to note that this gifted young painter makes his living as an elevator-boy and furnace-tender.

In the realm of poetry, the Negro has for centuries been manifesting rare reflective and philosophic qualities. Antarah ben Shedad el Absi (Antar the Lion), born about 550 A. D., was a warrior as well as the greatest poet of his time. In those poetical contests peculiar to the Arabs in pre-Islamic days, Antar was invincible; and one of his odes was judged worthy to be written in letters of gold and hung in the sacred Kaaba at Mecca. After his death, traditions of his fame spread throughout the Mohammedan world, and the "Romance of Antar," extolling his heroism and chivalry, is still one of the great Arabian classics.

The poet Juan Latino, mentioned by Cervantes in "Don Quixote," was an African Negro captured and brought to Europe by Spanish slave-traders. As he exhibited marked ability for learning, his master, a liberal-minded Sevillian, not only encouraged him to study but gave him his freedom and secured him the professorship of grammar, Latin and Greek at the University of Granada. Between 1570 and 1580 Latino published several books of verse, for the most part in the classic languages.

In Russia, there is probably no poet who has surpassed the creations of Alexander Pushkin. He has appropriately been called the father of Russian literature, and his influence in his native country has paralleled that of Dante in Italy, Shakespeare in England and Goethe in Germany.

In America, among the numerous names of Negroes deserving notice for their high quality of fantasy and the emotional fervor of their verse should be men-

tioned George M. Horton, the slave poet of North Carolina; Phillis Wheatley, born in Africa and reared as a slave in Boston; Jupiter Hammon, a Connecticut slave; Paul Laurence Dunbar, William Stanley Braithwaite, James Weldon Johnson and Countee Cullen.

The novel and the drama have likewise been enriched by Negro men of genius. In France, Alexander Dumas, the elder, and also his talented son, poured out a wealth of realistic and still widely read fiction. In 1922 the Goncourt Prize for the most excellent novel appearing in France during the year, was awarded to René Maran, an African Negro, for his "Batouala," a powerful and realistic story of life in primitive Africa.

Among the best novels and stories by contemporary American authors, these contributions by Negroes deserve a place: "Home to Harlem," by Claude McKay; "The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man," by James Weldon Johnson; "Dark Princess," by W. E. B. DuBois; "Fire in the Flint," by Walter F. White; and "The Walls of Jericho," by Rudolph Fisher.

In the dramatic *mise en scène* of Broadway, the genius of the Negro has been for some time a dynamic, if not always fully credited, factor. "Shuffle Along," "Blackbirds," "Rang Tang" and "Africana" are only a few of many theatrical successes written by Negroes in recent years. The serious plays, "Appearances" and "Extortion" (the latter a Belasco production), were both written by a Negro switchboard operator in a San Francisco hotel. With no training whatever in stage technique, this author, Garland Anderson, presents an astounding example of achievement, his tools having been his rich imagination and deep insight into life.

Negro actors have also frequently appeared of late in plays by white authors; and certainly the actors cannot be denied a large share in the creation of such outstanding dramatic productions as "Green Pastures," "Porgy," "Deep River," "Show-Boat," "Emperor Jones," and "In Abraham's Bosom." Bert Williams was for years regarded by dramatic critics as the greatest comedian on the American stage; Charles S. Gilpin, starring in Eugene O'Neill's "Emperor Jones," was selected by the Drama League of New York as one of the ten persons contributing most to the art of the theatre for the year; and in London Paul Robeson, in his début as Othello, received an ovation.

The inventive genius of the Negro is continually manifested. As far back as 1754 Benjamin Banneker, of Baltimore, made the first hour-striking clock (if not the first clock of any type) constructed in America. Before the Civil War, a number of inventions, including an appliance widely used in the shipbuilding industry, were originated by black folk; but owing to the peculiar status occupied by slaves, the ideas of these slaves were for a long time unpatentable by either themselves or their masters. The first patent granted to a Negro was in 1834, when Henry Blair, a freeborn Maryland Negro, devised a machine for harvesting

corn. During the Civil War Benjamin Montgomery, a slave of Jefferson Davis's, invented a device for propelling vessels; but President Davis was obliged to have the Confederate Congress pass a special law before he could patent the invention of his slave.

When John Ernest Matzeliger invented the first practical shoe-soleing machinery, a revolution was inaugurated in the shoe-making industry; his patent later became the foundation of the United Shoe Machinery Company, the largest and richest corporation of its kind in the world.

It was also a Negro, Lewis H. Latimer, who executed the drawings for the telephone patents of Alexander Graham Bell. In later years this brilliant technician became himself an inventor of note; for while in the employ of Hiram S. Maxim, he discovered a new method of making carbon filaments for the incandescent lamp. It was this invention which led to his life-long association with the Edison Company, in which he held important positions both in the manufacturing and legal departments.

Among those inventions which have contributed to the unprecedented mechanical progress of the present century, no inconsiderable number originated in the brains of Negroes. Granville T. Woods and his brother, Lyates Woods, have patented more than fifty important devices, instruments and machines in the electrical field; several of them have been assigned to the leading electric, telephone and telegraph companies. Upon agricultural machinery, the genius of George W. Murray, William Douglass, J. E. King and L. D. Moore has left a lasting imprint. Machinery for the manufacture of paper bags owes its existence to Louis Wade; piano-player mechanisms to Joseph Hunter Dickinson; while to Robert Pelham and Shelby Davidson is due the credit for the invention of machinery for tabulating post-office and census statistics.

In the invention of chemical processes, Dr. George W. Carver of Tuskegee Institute has made highly valuable discoveries in his extraction of substances from peanuts and clays. A process for hardening copper has been perfected by Edward E. Harris; and important research has been made in the paint and varnish industry by William G. Holly.

Over four thousand patents are held in the United States by Negroes. Elijah McCoy has fifty-seven to his credit, his most important inventions relating to the lubrication of machinery.

Surely beneath these creative outcroppings of the black man's mind—which have for the most part been accomplished under the most degraded and discouraging surroundings—there flows a great vital undercurrent of genius, potential and prophetic for more and more noble achievement as the years go by. In the words of David Belasco, which apply to the proscenium of the world as well as to that of the drama: "It is a far cry from kraal to cosmopolitan stage; but the Negro has made the journey. Watch him in the next decade."

SCIENCE TAKES A HOLIDAY

By JAMES A. MAGNER

CONTINUED criticism of the recent encyclical on Christian marriage would seem to indicate that the case for contraception is not so serenely installed as we might have been led to believe. The general body of criticism begins with a definite assurance that the Pope, with all respect to the integrity of his motives, is fighting for a lost cause; and it moves on, through various shades of feeling, to the declaration of an angry challenge against what is considered his unwarranted interference in a purely sociological or a purely personal matter.

This disturbed attitude, in quarters which apparently were so far emancipated from the Catholic point of view as to be fancied immune from papal influences, is not without its cheerful aspect. Even the remnants of recognition for a papal message provide a hopeful basis of assumption that there is still something to be said for the Catholic position. At the same time, however, there can be no doubt that insistent propaganda, invoking current science as the final judge of ethics, has inserted a dangerous wedge between the doctrinal faith and the moral outlook of an increasing group of Catholics. Face to face with the prospects of a heavy family burden, involving delicate issues of health, of comfort, and of a sustained standard of living, who will say that Catholics can be free from serious temptation?

Non-Catholics, with a shifting basis of faith and a pragmatic outlook on life, feel free to settle their moral problems by arguments which appeal to their personal judgment and more immediate requirements. So far as practical conduct is concerned, Catholics can do the same; but when Catholics begin to realize that their consciences have reached that independence which enables them to justify a course of conduct condemned by the Church and to align themselves with non-Catholic criticism when a papal document calls shame upon an immoral principle, then they have arrived at a religious crisis. The practice of contraception is being more generally acknowledged as an important factor in the decline of Catholic increase. May not the mental readjustment which it invites account also, in a partial way, for the undeniable loss of faith now telling even upon our static Catholic population?

There is no dearth of champions for the large family, as such. A general falling-off in the normal increase has brought about an ominous warning by sociologists and expert observers on every side. This alarm, however, is concerned with the current tendencies of the birth rate only as a sociological fact. It appeals to the collective instincts of patriotism, to the history of the rise of sturdy peoples and the decline of groups whose decadence can be graphed in an ebbing birth rate. It shakes a warning finger at the hygienic

evils that accompany the practice. But the moral aspects of the question are carefully avoided, as damaging to the strength of these arguments.

Fundamentally the question of contraception is one of morals, intimately affecting the individual. Overpopulation, or underpopulation, or decline in population may be of interest to life insurance companies and groups of national or otherwise organized affiliations. But the use of a faculty so vital to the welfare and happiness of the individual and of the race as that of biological reproduction can hardly claim immunity from ethical considerations. Reproduction as a natural instinct is second only to that of self-preservation.

Writers of a merely sociological or medical outlook, especially those who see marriage, not as a divine institution, but as a contemporary phase in the process of evolution, deny at the very start that there is any connection between natural processes and morality as Christianity defines it. They place the blame for introducing such a connection upon the celibate clergy. Their assumption is that persons who profess complete personal inexperience in so intimate a matter are totally unfitted to pass judgment on its moral aspects.

It is true, I believe, that married persons, having to shoulder the responsibilities and face the issues of conjugal life, must view them with a keener realization than persons whose interest is of a more objective and advisory character. It is possible also that profoundly personal and varied sexual experiences may give an emotional vibrance to the arguments of those who are in favor of contraception. Nevertheless, celibacy, as such, is no bar to an impartial and impressive study of this problem either in its human causes or in its moral and medical sides.

The question of contraception cannot be settled on merely emotional considerations. As an issue which calls up the fundamental purposes of natural faculties and touches the dignity of human nature, it may well include some disinterested thought upon ultimate values and results. Perhaps it may be stated as a dilemma in the form of a question. Can the average married couple, for reasons of health or reasonable economy, space their children by continence alone? Or, being sincerely desirous of leading virtuous lives and yet being morally incapable of prolonged abstinence, are they obliged to accept a child, let us say every year or every two years, as nature may ordain?

The answer which the advocates of contraception give is an emphatic no to both questions. The Federal Council of Protestant Churches has declared that sexual relations in the married state "have their source in the thought and purpose of God, first for the creation of human life, but also as a manifestation of divine concern for the happiness of those who have so

wholly merged their lives." No one can take exception to so beautiful and true a statement; but as the report goes on, it is forced to declare that these two purposes can be separated, without blame, by the human agents themselves, provided that their motivation is good. Accordingly, a couple might be justified in employing the act for its love significance alone, while frustrating its more fundamental purpose for the creation of life.

Taking this as a basis of reasoning, we may inquire why couples who are engaged, or merely in mutual accord, should be denied the moral right of similarly expressing their love, so long as they can avoid the obligations of parenthood. The more radical contraceptionists do assert this right. Others of a more moderate character consider such freedom to be socially undesirable; but how can they consider it a matter of outright moral guilt? Furthermore, if noble motivation justifies contraception, why may not the same principle be applied to all other processes subject to human control. It is useless, for example, to say that euthanasia is murder or suicide, if noble motivation can make right that which without noble motivation is wrong.

The question, then, would seem to come to this: is contraception unnatural in itself, regardless of all considerations, so that noble motivation can never make it right? There is an amusing implication in this question. I say amusing, because every time the term *unnatural* is used in this connection, a chorus arises to declare that cutting whiskers, shooting sparrows, building airplanes, and curing whooping cough are also unnatural. At the same time a solemn group of biologists is always prepared to assure us that the physiological destruction of vital elements, which is the object in contraception, is a natural process constantly going on independently of a voluntary arrangement. It would seem that a distinction of some kind must lurk in that innocent word—unnatural.

In the first place, there is a wide gap between the natural behavior of animals and the natural behavior of men. It is quite natural for certain kinds of fish to devour their young, and in many species of animals there are striking homosexual tendencies. Few persons, however, would label such acts as other than grossly unnatural, if practised by rational human beings. Unnatural, applied to men, means unethical or immoral; and immoral can be understood only as meaning that which is against the dignity of a rational nature. It would be absurd to call animals immoral for anything whatsoever that they might do.

As rational beings, men belong to a distinctly higher plane of nature than the brutes. They cannot, without violating their rational nature, indulge in a gratification of sense pleasures regardless of what reason tells them is the right use of those pleasures. They cannot, without immorality, enjoy a sensitive function while stultifying its primary natural purpose.

To forestall confusion of thought on this point, one must distinguish certain pleasures which seem to be an end in themselves and to have no further purpose than

the development of a sense of well-being. Pleasant odors, sweet sounds and refreshing breezes are enjoyed principally for their tonic properties of rest and recreation. Venereal pleasure, however, is not an end in itself. Otherwise it would be absurd to condemn on moral grounds such practices as the solitary vice or prostitution. Clearly, it is an inducement, intended by nature to promote the procreation of children, a task of such proportions that a powerful, almost overwhelming, natural lure is required to insure its fulfilment.

But if the inducement cannot be understood apart from the function to which it is naturally attached, then rational nature is violated by employing means which render the function impossible. And, what is more, it is against rational nature each time such contra-functional measures are taken.

This is something quite different from saying that the act may be used, without violation of conscience, at periods when conception is least likely to occur. Such usage may be distasteful, but it cannot be considered to violate the function as such. If natural circumstances, such as age, or diminution and even loss of fertility, do not favor generation, the rational agent cannot be held guilty.

These considerations suggest why cutting whiskers, shooting sparrows, building airplanes, and curing whooping cough are not to be placed in the category of contraception. The growth of whiskers is not a human or voluntary act. It is purely a vegetative process, and, as such, comes under the general norm which we apply to the activities of plants and brutes. Creatures lacking the principle of rationality, which implies an immortal destiny, cannot be said to have either rights or duties, and consequently a sufficient reason, to be judged under the general heading of our own well-being, can justify us in regulating or inhibiting their activities. Health, comfort and even personal appearance are sufficient reasons for cutting whiskers. Recreation or sport is an excuse for the shooting of sparrows. My health is ample reason for disinfecting the germs of whooping cough; and improved travel is enough for building airplanes.

Animals cannot be accused of immorality if they practise contraception, nor can men be accused of immorality if, for sufficient reasons, they take such measures, let us say, in the development of their live stock. But when we return to the sexual act by men themselves, we are once more in the realm of human functions, all of which are related somehow to the laws of morality. And just as it is morally wrong to attack directly the integrity of the unborn child, no matter how pressing the reasons may be, so, no matter how expedient contraception may seem, it is morally wrong to violate the functional purpose of the voluntary sexual act.

With this view of the matter, placing contraception in the class of actions which are intrinsically wrong, it becomes evident that there is no opportunity of exercising that mature judgment which the Lambeth Conference declares could render the practice morally per-

missible and even advisable at times. The principle of a sufficient reason can be invoked to justify actions which are morally indifferent in themselves and which take their moral color from attendant circumstances and motives; but when we are dealing with actions the morality of which is determined by the very nature of things, a system of casuistry cannot be employed.

These considerations, of course, are of interest only to what we may call the old line morality. The general current of the movement is not to establish the morality of contraception, but is rather to lift the whole question out of the realm of morality and to place it in a purely sociological light, without reference to any inherent principles of religion. According to this outlook, morality seems to be no more than a changing balance between private convenience and public respectability. And since the norms of public respectability are determined largely by public opinion, the function of the new moralist is to formulate the practice of an increasing percentage of society, to promote the sanctity of the new morality by legislative measures, and to outlaw, as antiquated and unscientific, the tenets of its more conservative elements.

In the last analysis, therefore, the solution of this question depends upon the concept of sin which we adopt. Is sin merely an inexpediency against current conventions, against the current economic and hygienic welfare of the individual, against an increasing sentiment of society? Or is it, as the Catholic Church teaches, an offense against the unchangeable law of nature, made known by the Creator through reason and revelation, and sanctioned by His Will under threat of just penalties in eternity? If it is the former, then the contraceptionists are right in regarding with scorn the intrusion of the Church into the sex problems of mankind. If it is the latter, then who can blame the Pope if he views with alarm the scientific pose of contraception and calls it a tremendous evil?

Catholic philosophers admit that moral principles are discovered and elaborated partially as the fruit of experience and social study. They will grant, moreover, that human nature, which is the subject of moral law, is evolutionary in so far as variety and mutation of experience are concerned. They would be false to the Christian tradition, however, if they made morals merely a question of social expediency or if they granted that human nature has so evolved in essence that it can manipulate its physiological behavior in a way which was evidently never intended for a rational agent, and still disclaim, in the process, any personal responsibility to an intelligent Creator.

From a crassly material standpoint, is it too much to say that the movement for contraception has been greatly hastened by the partial success of chemists in compounding poisons for the destruction of the vital element and by the comparative freedom which has been allowed their sales agents in placing these specifics on the market? The consciousness of being able to control the laws of nature has the peculiar effect of

confusing moral values. And from a more romantic viewpoint, is it unfair to describe its intellectual advocates as living in a painted dawn of rosy idealism? Its prophets have presumed upon the maturity of men's disinterestedness, and so they have banished the word sensuality from the language. They are silently engaged in a process of higher selection, which will eliminate the socially unfit from the race. They have attempted to make large families the ridiculous synonym of sordid poverty and cultural backwardness. Is it any wonder that they are exasperated because the Catholic Church fails to praise their good intentions, to recognize their ideals and hopes, and to share what they feel is a progressive and scientific vision?

Nevertheless, the mere preachments of the clergy will never stem the general tide, any more than will the warnings of statisticians. The moral problems of every age are closely allied to economic and social conditions; and to determine the personal guilt of those who are swept along in the tide, it is necessary to view the human mind in these settings. Exorbitant charges for obstetrics, the problem of housing a large family, the cult of being chic, on a hopelessly inadequate income, the movement away from the farm, partly due to oppressive taxation, and into the rented apartments of the city—all these are elements of an environment in which men and women find themselves today and of which they are the more or less helpless victims. To these elements may be added many others of a hypocritical and utterly selfish character, but the latter do not remove or vitiate the intense reality of the problems which face thousands of potential parents who sincerely dread a moral compromise in this generation.

Only in a readjustment of the social scheme may we look for a general change of mind, for a more generous outlook, and for that wise acceptance of natural burdens which makes for a virtuous and hardy generation. It is becoming increasingly obvious that the Catholic contribution toward the solution of this problem cannot end with a simple repetition of moral principles or with the establishment of ecclesiastical censures, but must enter with an ever-deepening and constructive vision into the more material and cultural phases of human life, to make easier and more joyous the burden of virtue.

Come Back

Come back, you little melodies
That make the spring the thing it is.

Come back, you music ever young
By birds in every tree-top sung.

Come back, you songs that lost your way,
That fell from heaven. O come to stay.

Come back you shooting-stars of sound
That dart through all the woodland round.

DANIEL SARGENT.

TRAVELING ACROSS RUSSIA

By J. AUFHAUSER

WHEN Dr. Uchino, a Japanese co-worker, and I parted in Munich during the summer of last year, we promised each other a speedy reunion in Kyoto. Then the financial catastrophe which was visited upon my country very nearly forestalled the journey for which I had been preparing for a long, long time. Fortunately, most of the money I had saved was in the form of bills of exchange; and after I had given the most solemn assurances that my trip was in the interests of science and learning, the Reichsbank agreed that I might use the money. Such are the preliminaries with which a would-be German traveler must reckon in these days.

Leaving Bavaria and later Berlin, I boarded the train which sped off to Njegoreloje on the Russian border. There we were transferred to the coaches we were to occupy for eight days, until we had reached the boundary of Manchuria. From this point forward the Chinese railroad officials played host, but by reason of the many political disturbances they were obliged to interrupt the journey several times and transfer their passengers to other trains. The result was that it took exactly twelve days to travel from Munich to the port in Korea from which I embarked for Japan.

From the scenic point of view such a trip offers very little. Once out of Berlin the great plains begin, and for more than seven days one experiences the monotony of level fields and steppes and vast forests, mostly of pines and birches. Even the Ural district, with its wooded hills, offers little to fascinate a European. There are, however, a few regions possessing real charm. Traveling through Manchuria one sees endless reaches of almost incredibly fertile land through which streams flow majestically. Millet, soy beans and rice are grown here by Chinese farmers who have moved from North and South China, but for the most part from Shantung, into this hitherto virgin colony. The Manchurian hills are covered with forests of an exceedingly varied kind—larches, elms, oaks, poplars, pines and other trees. Korean and Japanese settlers vie with the Chinese for the mastery of the land. It is true that the Nipponese, accustomed to a warmer and sunnier clime, are none too happy in Manchuria. But conscious of overpopulation at home, they are making a steadily more determined effort to establish themselves around Mukden. Along the way to Korea there are myriads of lilac-colored wild roses, marguerites and other flowers. But we saw not so much as a single wild beast—not even a rabbit.

The passengers on such a journey are naturally an international group. Most of them are Germans, Japanese and Chinese, but there are occasional travelers from England, Holland, Poland and the Scandi-

navian countries. In Siberia many Russians get into the third-class coaches, and later on there are Chinese and Koreans to take their places. One striking revelation is the fact that German is the dominant European tongue in the Far East. Many of the Russian railway men speak it, and Japanese travelers often use it excellently. Indeed, my conductor employed the Bavarian dialect, which he had acquired while he was a prisoner of war.

Now for some impressions of Russia. The track out of Njegoreloje is somewhat wider than a European roadbed would permit. We are greeted by a triumphal arch festooned with red banners carrying white or black inscriptions in Russian, most of which read, "Proletarians of all countries, unite!" These placards are a quite customary sight throughout Russia and Siberia. On our train there is a small group of German Communists, bound for an excursion in Crimea. They are welcomed by Soviet soldiers with the party greeting. Then they unfurl a red flag on which is written, "Fight against Fascism!" The Russian dining-car as far as Moscow is conducted in the European manner and is very good.

There is a delay of eight hours in the capital city, and we utilize them to make as extensive a tour as possible. The impression is very unfavorable. Most of the houses in the main streets are sorely in need of repair. Constantly one reads the sign, "Unoccupied." The shops, once filled with merchandise of every description, are absolutely empty, the show-windows are dusty, bleak and frequently shattered. Today private business is impossible in Soviet Russia, and all commerce is in the hands of coöperatives. As a member of one of these, a person receives cards for the purchase of bread, clothes, shoes and other commodities. The card is a guarantee of low prices. Armed with it, one can purchase a pound of bread for about two cents, whereas if purchased privately it would cost twenty-five times that much. Many people resell wares secured at the coöperative stores. Shoe cards are distributed among workers. If the number of cards available is smaller than the number of people in need of shoes, a commission is appointed to determine who shall be served first. Generally the coöperative stores are surrounded by long queues of would-be purchasers.

In Moscow, and indeed throughout Russia and Siberia, we saw only people in working clothes—tieless shirts, caps, jackets, mufflers. Once in a great while there appeared a girl dressed somewhat more pretentiously. As a general rule, young women wear very short skirts and are barelegged excepting for socks extending just a little above the shoes. Many walk about the streets smoking cigarettes. But bobbed hair is apparently rare outside the capital city. The whole

modus vivendi conforms with the absolute proletarian minimum. On the other hand, the prices exacted of foreigners are exorbitantly high. Luncheon at a second-class hotel costs about \$3.00; and on the train a bottle of beer is priced at \$1.00, while a package of chocolate is still more expensive. Rooms for the night cost from \$10.00 upward. A fearful meal is served in the Moscow-Manchuria dining-car, for which the sum exacted is about \$1.25. In short, one fares badly and pays dearly. There are exceedingly few automobiles, and taxis are prohibitive in price.

Apparently the Russian citizen is expected to stake all on his will power. The whole energy of the nation is dedicated to the fulfilment of the famous Five-Year Plan. Emotional life is suppressed consciously, and so also religious sentiment. In Moscow I visited the great Strassnoj Monastery, now transformed into a museum of the Godless. Unfortunately the exhibition rooms were closed for the day. In the courtyard flames flickered round ikons and other sacred objects which were just being burned. The splendid churches erected by Ivan the Terrible have likewise become museums; and one is appalled by the experience of watching spectators walk about among altars and statues with their hats on their heads, indifferent to the meaning of these things but eager to scrutinize the bad photographs hung everywhere by the propagandists for atheism. Many of these pictures satirize the Vatican or the clergy; others make fun even of the Our Father and the sacraments.

My guide informed me that religion had become a thing of the past in Russia. Divine worship is still continued in a few churches, but in Moscow these are visited only by a few old women. Conditions are somewhat different, he admitted, in remote villages. The object above all is to wean youth from religion. The priests are hated and despised, in fact disenfranchised. During my stay in the country I saw only one Russian priest. But I must admit that, though my passport and breviary sufficiently indicated that I myself am a Catholic priest, no one caused me the slightest inconvenience. Indeed, the customs officials were most cordial, nor did they concern themselves about my books and papers. When I inquired in Moscow where the museums of the Godless were, information was quickly supplied, the address was written down for me and a policeman promptly told me how to get there. Unfortunately we cannot take the danger of Russian atheism lightly. It is already spreading to other countries, China in particular. But, even so, opposition to religion is one thing in Moscow, and another in Russia as a whole. Along the Siberian railway church domes and crosses are common sights. It is only in the new colonies in the forest districts of the East that Bolshevism, with its repudiation of God, rules completely.

On such a long trip one naturally sees much of the industrial life of the country. Endless mounds of wood lay at the stations awaiting shipment. And of course

there are indications of industrialization, the significance of which for the Western world is incalculable. Once factory chimneys begin to smoke everywhere in Central Asia, the hegemony of Europe will have come to an end. Meanwhile it is true that the Asiatic character seems to lack inventiveness.

Today the Russian government is dedicated exclusively to purposiveness. Art and science are temporarily unimportant, and studies which serve no practical end are neglected. University professors are, on the whole, paid no better than are manual workers. Of these last, trained men receive about \$100 a month, while the pay of unskilled men is considerably lower. If my information is correct, the Soviet hope is that eventually—despite current rulings to the contrary—no member of the Communistic party is to receive more than \$200 a month, government officials included. At present a number of archaeological and other scientific undertakings are being financed, so as to win for Russia the reputation of being a cultivated country.

As is well known, the Russian woman works in masculine attire in factories and in various places where female labor is unknown in Europe. It would seem that in the industrial towns family life, as we know it, is at an end, and that the right of parents to determine how their children shall be educated has been abolished. Sundays, too, are not recognized in Russia. Industry is operated on the basis of a four-day week, so that every fifth day is a holiday. Accordingly if married people wish to spend their holidays together, they must arrange to work in the same shifts. The working day is seven hours. Only two national festivals are observed.

The most attractive thing about contemporary Russia is the fact that there is no unemployment—that the workers, despite their hard lot, do have enough to eat and are possibly better off materially than are millions of the desperately poor in Western lands. The average man is likewise encouraged to think that he is helping to establish a new social order, a new period in the history of mankind. A very real mysticism prevails, producing in countless hearts something akin to religious zeal.

A Polish gentleman en route to Harbin in the interests of the sugar trade talked a good deal with me about the Soviet rule, which he had observed carefully during many years. He felt that the present system might well last a hundred years. The army and the central government are very powerful. Orders are constantly changed to meet varying conditions. My Polish friend was of the opinion that Europe could ward off the Russian danger only with a huge international army, but conceded that to expect the creation of such a force was chimerical. Meanwhile, he thought, trade advantages were blinding Western peoples to the Russian danger.

But the train rumbled on and on. The worst inconvenience of the journey was the dust. Though the coaches are equipped with double windows only a few

of which can be opened, the said dust pours in nevertheless, penetrating clothes and filling the pores of the skin. The Russian roadbed is not covered with stones, so that even a train which moves at a slow pace raises veritable siroccos of dust. How envious we were of the people whom we could see bathing in streams as the train passed! Every passenger has his sleeping place; and if one is riding on the wooden benches of third class, one rents a mattress and pillow the charge for which is a ruble a day. I myself traveled the last way, obliged as I was by the plight of my own country to put up with a little inconvenience if I hoped to visit the Far East again.

While on the way through Siberia I shared a compartment with a Russian engineer and his wife and their grown son. We got on very well together. These people carried quantities of food with them, especially boiled fowl. They and I both enjoyed the curiosities of time in Russia. Since all the clocks which one sees at stations have Moscow time, the variation between what the sun and the clocks say is very considerable as one travels east. Finally it is really noon where we are while the timepieces declare that it is six o'clock.

The journey as a whole is genuinely depressing. Sometimes hundreds of human beings—men, women and children—are stretched out at a station with their little belongings, awaiting transportation to new occupations. The picture reminded one of the unhappy years of the war. One is never allowed to forget that this is the land of the proletariat. Though nobody would travel third class through Siberia in his Sunday clothes, it is nevertheless a little of a shock to enter the dining-car and observe the appearance of one's fellow diners, few of whom are even fairly presentably dressed. And this impression is repeated in a thousand ways.

As soon as one reaches Manchuria one is conscious of a change of environment. Here there live many White Russians, adherents of the former régime, close to their home land and yet exiled from it. They appeal to us because they are dressed as we are, because they act as we do, and because the merry laughter of children is heard amongst them (I heard no child laugh in Russia). Yes, in Manchuria the human eye seems to express hope and serenity, despite all the hardships endured.

I can only wish that all those who, living in Western countries, are enthusiastic advocates of the Russian system, would go to live and work in Russia for a while. It is true that Russia has no unemployed—an advantage accruing to it because of the tremendous tasks that await accomplishment. The Soviets have also managed certain other things very well: they send despoilers of the people to Siberia instead of to a comfortable jail for a few years, and they have instituted a monetary system which works very well. But however long the collective system may endure, it will not make a people happy either now or in the future.

A PRIZE TRANSLATION

By VITTORIO CERONI

THE ITALIANS feel that Dante is a sacred poet, that his poem is divine, and that there are many intimate correspondences between the sounds of the words and their meanings, and many exactitudes in the synonyms and idioms, that no translation will ever be able to reproduce. For instance, when we Italians call God with the name "Dio," it seems to us that the sharp and shrill sound of "i" (ee) pierces the clouds to reach God in the highest; while when we say "God," it seems to us that the round, heavy sound "o" fills the space very broadly around, but not very highly.

Professor J. B. Fletcher of Columbia University has recently published a poetical translation of "The Divine Comedy," not faithfully adhering to terza-rima, in which the original poem is written, but adopting an unlinked tercet, as a decent compromise, faithful to Dante and to the English language. I found the compromise most resourceful. While the translation gives to the English the harmony of a rhymed poem, it is able to keep in the unrhymed lines most of the Italian words literally translated, and suggesting the Italian text. In reading full terza-rima in English, most of the words are strange to the Italian student, who is many times amused at the pretentious Dantean word which is nothing but a pretentious English rhyme.

In my lectures on Dante I generally use Longfellow's translation because it gives an almost perfect correspondence of English and Italian words. Should I read a full canto as a whole, I would now prefer Professor Fletcher's translation for precise literary purposes. Furthermore I congratulate Professor Fletcher for distinguished artistic taste in the choice of the Botticelli illustrations used in his volume.

An Italian contrasting the *dolce far niente* of the land of romance with the speed-craze of New York, would hardly believe that in this very city there could be a scholar able to isolate himself in an immovable square foot of ground and undertake and accomplish the translation of a mediaeval masterpiece. The English language probably has the greatest number of translations of "The Divine Comedy." Professor Fletcher has given one of the most original contributions to the enjoyment of reading Dante.

In an interview with Professor Fletcher I was glad to discover that he is not only a literary man of some repute, but a poet with personality. This gives the reader complete trust in his translation. And I feel sure that were he asked why in certain instances he used certain words, why he preferred a certain construction, how he conceived a certain thought not expressed by Dante, he would always be able to justify himself. It is to his credit that he has not tried purposely to be different from other translators; on the contrary, he has here and there adopted from Longfellow, Norton, Johnson, and Grandgent, occasional phrases where the wording was perfect. Who ever would change the sound of the bells that seem "to mourn the dying day" (Purgatorio, VIII, 6)? It is beautiful to find in different languages lines wherein the translators seem to catch in the air the unchangeable echo of Dante's words. In front of the lukewarm spirits Virgil commands: "Non ragioniam di lor, ma guarda e passa!" (Inferno, III, 51); here Fletcher follows Longfellow's literal translation: "Let us not speak of them, but look and pass!"

In his introduction Fletcher faces with persuasive sincerity all the problems and difficulties of maintaining in the translation the literary values of the original masterpiece. There may be the danger of dressing Beatrice, the Florentine, in Queen

Victoria's style. Certainly the more rhymes a translator attempts to produce in English, a rhyme-poor language, from Italian, a language rich in rhyme, the further away from the original he strays.

Dante is a master artist and scientist in his similitudes and comparisons. These are considered so valuable that special indices for reference have been made of them. From the literal translation of Longfellow below and that of Fletcher, it appears that the latter has introduced a comparison which does not exist in the original (*Inferno*, III, 49):

Dante: "Fama di loro il mondo esser non lassa."

Longfellow: "No fame of them the world permits to be."

Fletcher: "Their fame on earth is as a breath on glass."

In *Inferno*, XV, 124, Dante conceals his tribute of silent pity for his teacher Brunetto Latini in an expression of love and sympathy:

Dante: ". . . e parve, di costoro, quegli che vince, non colui che perde."

Longfellow: ". . . and seemed to be among them
The one who wins, and not the one who loses."

Fletcher: ". . . and he seemed to run
As one there gaining and not losing place."

Fletcher's words stress the material idea of running and gaining place, while in the original all the force of the comparison is on the personality of the subject of the verb "vince" (win). I do not feel in Fletcher's words what is suggested to me by Dante: unfortunate Brunetto, he seemed the one who wins and not the one who loses; he who won teaching Dante "come l'uom s'eterna" (how man becomes eternal), lost his race to the eternal prize!

Little variations may bring out new flashes of thought. The journey of Ulysses with his brave men is presented by Dante (*Inferno*, XXVI, 125):

Dante: "De remi facemmo ala al folle volo."

Longfellow: "We of the oars made wings for our mad flight."

Fletcher: "We of our oars made wings for the mad flight."

Literal: "Of the oars we made wing to the mad flight."

I am sure each translator had his reason for this difference in wording, and the beauty of each text is evident from comparative study. Personally I think that the possessive "our" spoils the mystery of the mad adventure, because it makes the flight more definite and less mad than it would seem were it inferred that the oars belonged to the boat and not to the men.

Throughout it is evident that Fletcher's translation is diligent, accurate, animated. The last line of the *Paradiso* is:

Dante: "L'amor che muove il sole e l'altre stelle."

Longfellow: "The love which moves the sun and the other stars."

Fletcher: "The love that moves the sun and every star."

I like Fletcher's version with the meaningful "every." Although not literally translated from Dante's "Giustizia mosse il mio Alto Fattore," Fletcher's line is very Dantean: "Justice my Maker moved Who rules above"; whereas the literal translation of Longfellow proves in this case entangled: "Justice incited my sublime Creator" (*Inferno*, III, 4).

Longfellow in his almost literal translation overlooked as

without importance the Italian "un poco" in the line, "Poi ch'ei posato un poco il corpo lasso" (*Inferno*, I, 28), saying: "After my weary body I had rested." But Fletcher understood the importance of the theory of Dante that enjoyment of full rest is deserved only after achievement, and faithfully translated the beautiful line: "After some rest to body spent and sore."

A privilege of a poet translator is to be able to interpret the meaning of the Italian word rather than to give the literal translation. This may be responsible for many misrepresentations of the original thought. Replacing for instance "Father" with "Sire" (*Paradiso*, I, 28) must be forgiven to the rhyme. The active thought of Dante in "Poca favilla gran fiamma seconda" (*Paradiso*, I, 34), repeated also in *Paradiso*, XXIV, 125, ". . . quest'e la favilla che si dilata in fiamma, poi, vivace," which in both instances means "little spark produces great flame," is hardly represented in the passive line of Fletcher: "The little spark is followed by great flame." Count Ugolino's words (*Inferno*, XXXIII, 9) are: "Parlare e lagrimar vedrai insieme" ("Speaking and weeping shalt thou see together"). Dante very easily could say "udrai" (shall hear) instead of "vedrai" (shall see). Fletcher says: "Speaking and weeping mingled shalt thou hear."

Learned theologians would object certainly to Fletcher's assertion in *Paradiso*, I, 3, that the glory of God shineth "in one part less and in another more," whereas Dante says, "In one part more and in another less." Psychologically speaking they would claim that in Dante's line is shown the logical distribution of the generosity and justice of God, and in Fletcher's line is suggested the unchristian idea of prejudiced discrimination. Also, where Dante defines God as "lo Imperator che sempre regna" (*Paradiso*, XII, 40), he includes cleverly in the words "sempre regna" (always rules) the biblical and theological assertion and requirement "without beginning and without end"; the translation of Fletcher, "The Emperor who reigneth without end," implies the idea of immortality, not the eternity of God. Likewise, theologians would not approve the translation of "Vergine Madre" (Virgin Mother) of Dante with "Maid and Mother" of Fletcher. "Virgin Mother" suggests the divine miracle, whereas the translation of Fletcher may imply profane desecration.

The above comments on Professor Fletcher's excellent achievement are a sincere tribute of appreciation paid to a great Dante scholar, and to his endeavor to portray in his own light the master's thought.

Praise of Small Birds

Sing praise of small birds who build nests in eaves
And are content with springtime near at hand,
Who pour their simple music through the leaves
And ask no more. Beyond their pale upland,
The eagle, terrible with hate may go;
The vulture, that marauder, he arrives
At heaven's opal fortress, but below,
They lead their docile, matrimonial lives.

Dear innocents! Upon a single branch
They find their world and are content to make
The most of little and to have that long.
In their arboreal breasts no avalanche
Of dark desire burns and for the sake
Of simple beauty they pour out their song.

HAROLD VINAL.

COMMUNICATIONS

A PROGRAM FOR CATHOLIC ACTION

Westfield, N. J.

TO the Editor: The recent encyclical of our reigning Pontiff, "Quadragesimo Anno," is necessarily an expression of basic principles. Progress of Catholic Action toward the objective of this encyclical thus requires specific application in each country to the particular faults of business customs and of the laws governing business.

Although many articles have been written on the subject of this encyclical and upon Catholic Action, I have yet to see one which offers in some detail any specific remedies needed. It is also amazing to note that although we have been flooded with talk and writings upon what caused our present depression and how to get out of it, the discussion has almost entirely concerned surface palliatives and not fundamental cures.

Our economic structure, or business, is so sick that emergency measures—oxygen, heart stimulants, artificial feeding and what have you—may be required to pull the patient through the crisis. This letter does not pretend to offer a remedy for our present deplorable plight but rather—in conjunction with Catholic Action—discusses how to keep prosperity, once we have it back, and how equitably to insure its enjoyment by all classes.

As a controversial start, therefore, in the direction of outlining specific remedies to guarantee to each a fair deal, an honest wage and business freedom, the following suggestions are made.

Business today is almost entirely conducted by corporations. Corporations are created by the government (usually state) and are therefore subject to absolute control of their charters by the power which creates them. Most of the recommendations made are based upon the passage of state laws which will change corporate charters. Since the national government has jurisdiction over corporations only if and when they do an interstate business, similar national laws should be passed as a requirement for any corporation whose products are sold, either directly or indirectly, in interstate commerce.

(1) In order that labor may be removed from the market as an inferior commodity: (a) Every corporation shall pay a minimum wage for a forty-four hour week, which wage shall be based upon a periodic average of selected basic commodity prices and the sum required upon such basis to enable a family of five to live in comfort and to save. Payment of this wage for the full year, or for the season, when specific labor is employed only seasonably, shall be made before any interest is paid on funded indebtedness or dividend paid upon stock. (b) The organization of unions in each business and each industry shall be required, and the union of workers in each corporation shall be entitled to a 33 1/3 percent representation on its board of directors. (c) Each industry shall organize into an association or guild at whose local, state and national meetings labor unions, managing executives and stockholders shall have equal representation.

(2) To help overcome price wars and overproduction: (a) Each corporate member of such a guild or association shall file with its guild a periodical statement of the amount of raw materials and finished and semi-finished products on hand, and the prices it proposes to charge for such a subsequent period as may suit the needs of the industry. The maintenance of these prices for such periods and the accuracy of these statements of raw materials and finished and semi-finished products shall be subject to adequate fine by the guild, and the guild shall have the right to audit each corporate member's books, in order to ascertain strict compliance with these requirements.

(3) To prevent unfair competition: (a) No quantity discount whatever shall be allowed and each guild shall have power to punish any such by adequate fines. (b) No wholesale discount shall be allowed to any corporation or individual who wholly or in part conducts a retail business, and each guild shall have power to adequately enforce this.

(4) To protect stockholders: (a) Corporations shall close stock transfer books at least three months before the election of officers or boards of directors and shall furnish each stockholder a list of the names and addresses of stockholders arranged by states, cities, towns and counties. (b) Stockholders residing in each state or section thereof shall elect delegates to any meeting for election of officers or directors. (c) The capital structure of any corporation shall consist solely of one class of full voting common stock and of bonds. Bonds shall be issued only for such improvements as will increase earnings of a corporation to such an extent that interest can be paid each year over and above a fair dividend upon its stock and that also, over and above these two, a yearly sum can be earned sufficient to amortize the bonds within twenty years. (d) Each guild shall conduct an exchange for the purchase and sale of its corporate members' securities.

(5) To provide real competition and to divide industry into corporations which do not have a monopolistic control: (a) Present corporations shall be split up in so far as possible into units existing before mergers or purchases made within the last twenty years, and no corporation shall merge with or purchase another corporation or hold stock in any other corporation whatsoever. (b) Corporations shall be allowed to manufacture only one specific kind of commodities.

(6) Credit is as essential a part of our medium of exchange as is money. Just as the national government has absolute control of its money, so it should have absolute control of its commercial credit, or commercial banking. One of the most fertile sources of our economic evils and of the control of industry in the hands of a few has been the control of our commercial banking by individuals. Therefore: (a) All commercial banks shall be taken over by the United States. (b) Directors of these banks shall be selected by the guilds in the town or city in which they are located and these directors shall choose the bank's officers. (c) These banks shall loan any individual or corporation a stated percentage upon securities or property whose value shall be based upon the same determinants as are now used by National Bank Examiners in deciding upon safety of loans. (d) These banks shall do a commercial business only and shall charge approximately 2 percent upon loans and three cents for each check cleared for a depositor. They shall pay no interest upon deposits, but every depositor, just as now, shall be required to maintain an adequate balance. (e) Each bank and each present branch of a bank shall be maintained as a separate unit operating as a branch of the United States Treasury, except of course that unnecessary banks shall be liquidated and closed.

(7) Public utility corporations are essentially a monopoly, and hence in addition to the foregoing require some special regulations: (a) The capital stock of any utility corporation shall be based upon original investments for plant, equipment, right of way, etc., plus expenditures for repairs, less a fair amount of depreciation, and upon the estimated value of its franchise. (b) Fifty percent of the value of its franchise, represented by shares of the capital stock, shall be the property of the community, county or state in which the corporation does business.

(8) As for the railroads, two more special provisions may be necessary: (a) Freight schedules shall be based solely upon a ton mile charge or a cubic foot charge for cargoes which are bulky but light, with no separate rates for classifications or com-

modities. (b) Maximum charges for freight and passenger service may be established by the Interstate Commerce Commission and the several state regulating bodies, but this shall not bar any railroad from charging less, provided its schedules are filed as indicated in (2a).

(9) As to government revenues, each department of government which renders a special service, such as the United States Post Office Department, shall charge a sufficient amount to show a minimum profit for each fiscal year.

Many of these suggestions will be met with a hue and cry. What of it? The only question to apply to each is: is it sound economics? Some of them will be answered by the statement that they are impossible of fulfilment. In spite of all the volumes that could be written to show the apparently insurmountable difficulties to their enactment into law, the fact remains that they all can be achieved. If you have any doubts about this, consider the enactment of prohibition.

They certainly will make it harder for any man to grab a million or more dollars by stock juggling and bank control. By the same token they will reduce unemployment to a minimum, insure a competence to workers, and go a long way toward preventing another period of business stagnation such as we are going through now.

They are not a complete remedy for our ills. Not by a great deal. They are presented as succinctly as possible, with no attempt to prove each case. However, they are at least an attempt to state a concrete program, partial though it be, and give our Catholic economists something definite to work upon.

G. B. NEALE.

THE CAMEL AND THE NEEDLE'S EYE

Washington, D. C.

TO the Editor: Mr. Clement J. Freund, in an article entitled "The Camel and the Needle's Eye" in *THE COMMONWEAL* for April 13, 1932, thinks it probable that only an occasional employer in Wisconsin can pay a comfort wage, which he identifies with a living wage, and he is of the opinion that conditions in other states are not unlike those in Wisconsin. He permits his reader to draw the conclusion that the Catholic business man who wishes to follow the encyclicals and save his soul would be well advised to get out of business.

While such a solution, if generally adopted, might be good for the Catholic business man, it would be bad for business. Perhaps therefore a further study of the encyclicals should be made before taking such drastic action. The living wage of the encyclicals is not really the same thing as Mr. Freund's "comfort wage" for a family of two parents and three children. According to Pope Leo XIII, the workman's wages should be sufficient to enable him to maintain himself, his wife and his children in reasonable comfort. The number of children is not limited to three in the encyclical. If the workman has six children, he has a right to earn a comfortable living for them. On the other hand, if he has only one child, he cannot invoke the encyclical for a right to a "comfort" income for the other two children who do not exist. He may have a right to the income with which to support these non-existent children, but the statement of the right is not to be found in the encyclicals.

I recall reading some time ago some British statistics indicating that about a fourth of the men workers in England were single or widowers, another fourth married but without dependent children, and only about 10 percent with more than three dependent children. I do not know where to find corresponding figures for Wisconsin or the United States. They would probably show a somewhat higher number of dependents.

Mr. Freund will probably object that it is necessary to pay all workers a wage high enough to support a family of five in order to prevent employers from discharging their employees who have dependent families and hiring those who have not. This may be true. I do not know. But Pope Leo thought that something could be accomplished by benefit and insurance societies. He wrote: "We find in it [the idea of benefit and insurance societies] the grounds of the most cheering hope for the future; provided that the associations We have described continue to grow and spread, and are well and wisely administered" ("Rerum Novarum"). More recently Catholic authorities in Europe have looked with favor on the "family wage" plan by which larger families are paid an additional wage, not by the individual employer but by the industry as a whole. Pope Pius XI says in "Quadragesimo Anno": "We might utter a word of praise for various systems devised and attempted in practice, by which an increased wage is paid in view of increased family burdens, and a special provision is made for special needs."

The Catholic business man before deciding to give up the struggle should also read the following from the same encyclical: "If the business makes smaller profit on account of bad management, want of enterprise or out-of-date methods, this is not a just reason for reducing the workingmen's wages. If, however, the business does not make enough money to pay the workman a just wage, either because it is overwhelmed with unjust burdens, or because it is compelled to sell its products at an unjustly low price, those who thus injure it are guilty of grievous wrong; it is they who deprive the workingmen of the just wage, and force them to accept lower terms."

FRANK O'HARA.

Hampton Falls, N. H.

TO the Editor: I am taking it for granted that Mr. Freund's article in the April 13 *COMMONWEAL* told nothing new to the man in business, but it did to me, and I suspect to a good many others. And yet, admitting that the effort to pay a living wage to its employees has been the cause of many a business failure, just what can be suggested as a remedy?

I confess that the more I think it over, the more perplexed I am.

I can name one case, and I suppose that there are countless others like it, where in order to keep its factories running, and paying good wages, a town agreed that said factories should not be taxed. To give employment to those to whom the factories could not, the town also made larger and larger appropriations for road work and town improvement, raising the valuation and piling up the taxes on private property, stores, etc., until these went bankrupt or moved away, throwing their clerks and accountants out of work, and at the same time reducing the town's taxable property.

In another town not many miles away, the business managers suggested a similar remedy, but the town refused, and as a result the factories were obliged to shut down and move away one after another, and the storekeepers there lost their trade.

Some years ago the state devised the scheme of offering state aid for road construction to the small farming towns, half and half, i.e., whatever the town would raise for that purpose to be doubled by the state, hoping in this way to increase employment and the spending capacity of all. The selectmen and voters of these small towns, realizing that each must pay its share of state expenses whether appropriated for their own or other towns, naturally grabbed for all they could get. State and town

valuations were raised and taxes piled higher and higher, but even so, the towns were forced to borrow money and run deeper in debt. When a farmer's tax bill for the year reaches 50 percent of his net income, he can hardly afford to hire help at wages twice as high as he can hope to earn, and hired men are thus thrown out of work.

When I speak of the farmer's net income, I include everything raised on the farm and consumed by the farmer's family—vegetables, fruit, meat, milk, eggs, fuel, lumber, etc. The actual net cash income of many a farmer nowadays can scarcely be reckoned at more than \$100 a year, after taxes, interest on farm property, repairs on buildings and farm equipment are subtracted.

Fortunately, however, most farmers here in the East—at least those of my acquaintance—inherited good bank accounts, laid by in the old days when farming was done by horse- and ox-power. Of late years these bank accounts have steadily diminished, and in some cases mortgages on farm property have been forced on the owners.

Now the states, realizing that the plan has worked only too well, are offering the small towns state aid only on condition that they will cut down their appropriations and reduce their debts, and the selectmen and tax-paying voters are striving to outvote the poll-tax payers who see the only hope of employment slipping away from them, and fail to realize that state and town appropriations, while giving them work from one quarter, take it away in another.

WILLIAM EVERETT CRAM.

GAMALIEL BRADFORD

Brockton, Mass.

TO the Editor: The recent death of Gamaliel Bradford, eminent biographer, recalled a letter which he wrote me and from which I quote, as I feel sure that your readers will be interested to know of his favorable attitude toward Catholicism:

"... I was especially interested in the approval of a Catholic reader. As you perhaps gathered from 'Life and I,' I have a profound reverence and admiration for the Catholic Church. I am more and more inclined to believe that if Christianity has the future before it, that future will be intimately connected with the Catholic tradition, and certainly the deepest and richest secrets of mysticism in the past are wrapped up in the pages of the great Catholic divines. . . ."

Possibly this splendid tribute emanating from such a scholarly source may serve to allay the fears of the alarmists among our own brethren and to spur our clergy on to greater efforts. As Canon Sheehan wrote in his volume, "Under the Cedars and the Stars," "The Catholic priesthood knows not its own power; if it did every form of error and corruption would go down before it." *Allons!*

E. F. LUCEY.

WHAT IS CATHOLIC LEAKAGE?

Indianapolis, Ind.

TO the Editor: In his communication of April 13, on "What Is Catholic Leakage?" the Pilgrim says: "The need is imminent for vocations to the priesthood, secular and religious, and for the Sisterhoods." Aren't the Brotherhoods worth mentioning? Or doesn't the Pilgrim know we are laboring to prevent Catholic leakage?

BROTHER ERNEST, C.S.C.

THE PLAY

By RICHARD DANA SKINNER

The Truth about Blayds

THE MISCHIEVOUS A. A. Milne, when he wrote the *Blayds* play about ten years ago, must have had in his mind a touch of the same complex which has obsessed Pirandello, namely, the many facets of "truth." But Milne is quite willing to joke about the whole matter and turn it into the substance of comedy, whereas Pirandello is mightily and absurdly serious about it.

"The Truth about Blayds" is a study, in light vein, of the ease with which mediocre minds can turn and twist facts—"rationalize" them, if you prefer—in order to suit obviously selfish purposes. It asks the question, "What should the family and heirs of a great poet do when, after his death, they discover that the poems were not his at all, but the work of a dead friend?" The unanimous answer is, "Do nothing"—but the motives for reaching that dubious decision are as varied as the characters of the different heirs. Consider, for example, the plight of Oliver Blayds's son-in-law, William Blayds-Conway. He was, once upon a time, Blayds's secretary. He has devoted his entire thin life to playing Boswell to the "great man," to taking notes of every word he uttered, and to preparing material for a great two-volume biography. The disclosure that Blayds was a fake and a literary thief would rob him utterly of his remaining life work. Moreover, until an old will is discovered, by which the real author of the poems left his entire property to Blayds, there is the problem of giving up all the property, of becoming a poor man, and of discovering somewhere the rightful heirs of the true poet. Now William, being just a born shadow of the great, cannot face these possibilities. He applies every conceivable sophistry to the situation.

Then there are the two grandchildren, Septima and Oliver Blayds-Conway, each of whom had planned a career which depended to a large extent upon the prestige and the material fortune of the grandfather. Above all, there is Blayds's younger daughter, Isobel, who has devoted her entire life to nursing the old man, giving up love, marriage and everything of her own individuality for the sake of the self-appointed task. It is Isobel, of course, admirably played in the present production by Pauline Lord, who stands out until the very last act for publishing the entire truth. It was to her that old Blayds himself confessed the truth at the close of his ninetieth birthday celebration, just before his death. Hers is the direct type of mind that does not welcome circumventions. But even she capitulates in the end, coming to some vague conclusion that the apparent lesser of two evils is to say nothing. In the meantime, William and the others have brought themselves to the satisfactory conclusion that old Blayds was probably wandering in his mind, or might have been exaggerating, or that, in any case, he deserved much of the credit for bringing the poems to the light of day. Nothing is very clear except that a group of quite average people, when faced by a real problem in ethics, will flounder about in any convenient morass that promises escape from the main issue. It is about such people that Milne centers the comic irony of his attack, and not, in the Pirandello fashion, about the central problem of truth itself.

At bottom, Milne is quite fond of this sort of character study. He rather likes to create or rake up a past and to show the moral instability of human beings in facing factual issues. Whether he has any positive philosophy of his own is a bit difficult to discover. In "Michael and Mary," Milne seemed to ap-

proach quite resolutely the old Greek idea of a relentless fate that pursues bad deeds to the point of ultimate retribution. One gathered, at least, that he accepted as a very real problem the law of consequences. On the other hand, in his gentle legend, "The Ivory Door," he showed, under cover of convenient symbols, an almost passionate attachment to the need of driving at the truth about ourselves and of throwing off the chains of our cherished personal legends by which we seem to be what we are not. Again, in "Mr. Pim Passes By," we have another case of a vanished past threatening to intrude itself upon a comfortable present, and of the mild terror which an impending revelation of truth brings to the average human. It is only by recalling and comparing various aspects of Milne's work that we can reasonably assume on his behalf a strong preoccupation with the practical truth and with the unfortunate consequences of any violation of integrity. The theme runs more or less clearly through most of his plays, and always at the expense of the weak and understandable humans who find it so difficult to adjust actions and emotions to inexorable facts.

The contrast with Pirandello is interesting if not exactly inevitable. Pirandello, by the very title of one of his best known plays, "Right You Are if You Think You Are," betrays his fundamental scepticism as to the existence of truth itself. He is unduly puzzled, as only a muddle-headed sentimentalist could be puzzled, by the difference between objective truth and subjective opinion. The mere fact, so to speak, that one man can be color blind makes him doubt the existence of the vibrations which produce the sense of color in the majority of eyes. His argument simply runs that inasmuch as one man sees a "color" where another sees no "color," we must remain forever uncertain as to the very existence of color-producing vibrations. He is also fond of mixing up his definitions. He is quite apt to speak of brown bread and white bread and black bread for the sole purpose of showing that they are quite unlike and that, for this reason, there is no such thing as mere bread. He might just as well put a Pekingese beside a Great Dane and challenge you to prove that there is such a thing as a dog. In brief, he uses either the limitations of human observation or the lack of definition in common human speech to attack the basic principle of objective truth. He is unsettling to the average mind simply because he is himself profoundly unsettled and confused. I do not think the same thing applies to Milne. In fact, it is precisely the Pirandello mind, in more modest and bourgeois proportions, that Milne is constantly subjecting to his deceptively mild ridicule.

The present revival of "The Truth about Blayds" has all the advantages of direction and production by Guthrie McClintic, of Pauline Lord's sensitive acting as the deeply wounded Isobel, of O. P. Heggie's rich first interpretation of old Oliver Blayds, and of a cast that includes Effie Shannon as Blayds's married daughter and Ernest Lawford as the ubiquitous and irritating William Blayds-Conway. The first act is by all odds the best part of the play. But there are many passages in the ensuing acts which display Milne at his best in the rôle of inquisitor general of human frailty in the matter of the verities. (At the Belasco Theatre.)

Savings

The poets hoard the moments other men are
spendthrift of,
And in a quiet place they count again the
things they love.

FREDERIC THOMPSON.

BOOKS

Through Mr. Lewisohn's Glasses

Expression in America, by Ludwig Lewisohn. New York: Harper and Brothers. \$4.00.

AS A CRITIC of American literature and culture, Mr. Ludwig Lewisohn is unusually well equipped. Born in Germany, reared in South Carolina, a student at Columbia, professor in the University of Wisconsin and Ohio State, editor in New York, resident for the last seven years in Paris, he regards American life from no provincial point of view. He may claim to know the country well both by direct acquaintance and by long reflection. As a Jew, he possesses a sympathetic understanding of suppressed minorities; as a distinguished author, internationally acclaimed, he can duly appreciate the American psychology of success. Novelist, poet, autobiographer and essayist, he writes in that style of flexible yet weighted beauty which is the best product of the English tradition sharpened by acquaintance with Continental clarity. He seems to have read everything (except Russian literature, by which he is singularly untouched); he is extraordinarily sensitive to all forms of literary technique, and he has an inspiring recognition of art's responsibilities. Associated with these great merits are defects almost equally great. Keen in intuition, he is hopelessly weak in logic; emotionally liberal, he possesses no real understanding of the economic and political factors beneath every culture; gifted with individual psychologic insight, he applies rigid psychoanalytic categories to art after the worst manner of Freud's literary disciples.

In "Expression in America" Mr. Lewisohn's abilities and limitations are all in evidence. Comparing this work with Barrett Wendell's "Literary History of America"—which was the best that we could do a generation ago—one sees the almost incredible advance in profundity and seriousness accomplished in American criticism during the twentieth century. Mr. Lewisohn hardly touches a single writer in the long list of American authors without illuminating some phase of his work; versed in the method of Sainte-Beuve, he often succeeds in "placing" his man, recognizing and delimiting the individual's peculiar quality, better than has ever been done before in America. Throughout, he presents our literature as a living, growing thing, struggling toward a constantly more adequate expression and criticism of American experience.

It is in his generalizations regarding this experience, in his treatment of cultural backgrounds, and in his summing up of social periods, that Mr. Lewisohn's weaknesses are most apparent. Here his work is far inferior to Vernon Parrington's "Main Currents in American Thought." Mr. Lewisohn is fairly obsessed by his hatred of Calvinism, whose devastating influence he discerns spread over the whole of American life. Unhistorically, he fails to discriminate between the Puritanism of the colonists and the much more important Methodist movement of the nineteenth century; he disdains the pioneer, for whose hardy adventurousness he has no good word, seeing in Cooper's Leatherstocking, for example, only a "murderer" of Indians; he is not in the least interested in the effect of modern industry on art. As a result, his dramatis personae seem actors on an empty stage haunted by vague leering shadows of Puritanism in the wings. This accounts for his exaggeratedly psychoanalytic and hence inadequate treatment of Poe, Melville and Howells. Everywhere from Emerson to Sherwood Anderson he finds our writers either sex-repressed or sex-obsessed. Many of them no doubt have been. But Mr. Lewisohn should have

remembered his own remark: "We have no need to be always protesting against that which does not trouble us." It would be fatally easy to psychoanalyze Mr. Lewisohn himself.

The volume is full of inconsistencies, according as Mr. Lewisohn in his more genial moments accepts any "expression" of American life as valuable or in more austere mood insists upon the presence of critical standards within the "expression." The remarkable results accruing from this uncertainty are illustrated by his enthusiastic study of Mark Twain, to whom he allots more space than to any other author except Emerson. Mark Twain, he admits, "had no philosophy, no values"; he was "adolescent in intellect" and cherished "the ideas of a village agnostic"; in his work "we find the crudest and most shallow treatment of the most intricate matters." Yet, Mr. Lewisohn asserts, "all this, be it emphatically noted, does not count against Mark Twain; it counts for him." Why? Because he was "the average American of his time." This is not criticism but the breakdown of criticism. Mr. Lewisohn knows as well as anyone that great literature is not the product of "average" minds, but more than once he suffers from these attacks of critical amnesia.

No, "Expression in America" is not quite the masterpiece that it has been proclaimed in many quarters. It is an uneven work, exceedingly brilliant at times and, again, exceedingly inept. But it is, and this is perhaps sufficient praise, easily the most serious and significant, as well as the most entertaining, study yet made of the meaning of American literature as a whole.

ERNEST SUTHERLAND BATES.

Aristocracy Amuck

Once a Grand Duke, by the Grand Duke Alexander of Russia. New York: Farrar and Rinehart, Incorporated. \$3.50.

THE ONLY explanation for this amazing record of things that never happened is that the book is sensational copy made out of stories told a ghost writer by the Grand Duke Alexander. If the Grand Duke is the author, then the horrors of the Revolution must have weakened his memory. Some reviewers have acclaimed this biography as "a historical document of inestimable value," but a few of the erroneous statements it contains, noted below, will show its real character.

According to the writer, the late Czar Nicholas II became heir to the Russian throne upon the death of his elder brother. Yet the czar was born in 1868, a year and a half after his parents' marriage; his brother, Alexander, born in 1869, died at six months. The Grand Duke's uncle, Constantine, is described "enjoying the companionship of his second wife, a former ballerina"; in reality he was married only once, and his wife, a famous beauty, survived him twenty years. The wife of the son of that same Grand Duke Constantine was a Princess of Saxe-Altenburg, not of Saxe-Weimar. No Archduke Albrecht attended the coronation of Alexander III, but an Archduke Charles Louis. These mistakes as to members of his family and other royal personages are amazing.

They are, however, trifling in comparison with fantastic accounts of events which never took place: for instance, a court ball given by Alexander II the last year of his reign, at which appeared his morganatic wife, the Princess Yourievskaya, of whose behavior the Grand Duke gives details. No ball was given at the Winter Palace that season, since the court was in mourning for the late Empress Marie Alexandrovna; the Princess Yourievskaya was not accepted by St. Petersburg society; and the Grand Duke Alexander, being only fifteen years old at the time, could not have attended the ball, even

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NEXT WEEK

NATIONAL-SOCIALISM IN GERMANY, by Johannes Mattern, is a sane exposition of Hitlerism. The growth of Hitlerism in Germany is variously considered a menace to the peace of Europe. Will Hitler in power, as the writer believes he will be in power if there are not a minimum number of concessions this summer at Lausanne, really unsheathe the sword, or merely continue to rattle it? Mr. Mattern's swift and factual account of the inception and organization of the Hitler party is illuminating. . . . LITURGY AND THE DEPRESSION, by the Reverend William Michael Ducey, O.S.B., considers liturgy as the Mystical Body of Christ in action and emphasizes the necessity for restoring the liturgy to its rightful place in the minds and hearts of Catholics, not for aesthetic reasons, but for the vital reason of bringing Christ's Kingdom on earth. . . . HAYDN YESTERDAY AND TODAY, by Paul Schaezler, is a charming appreciation of a composer distinguished for gaiety, clarity and harmony—elements so rare today, to our loss. Mr. Schaezler's biographical sidelights and critical comparisons of Haydn's work are delightfully and valuably elucidating. . . . THE NEGRO CHALLENGES CHRISTIANITY, by the Reverend John T. Gillard, S.S.J., takes up the question of a truly Christian attitude toward the Negro and what such an attitude means to the faith of the Negroes. "In the United States we have a mission field unparalleled in opportunity," says the writer. "Waiting for someone to sow the seed are 12,000,000 souls plowed by physical pain, harrowed by spiritual suffering and furrowed by fear for the future." In a subsequent paper, the writer considers the inroads of Communism into the ranks of the Negro and the Negro's challenge to Communism. In a third paper, the writer takes up the relations of the Catholic Church with the Negro.

if it had taken place. Equally fantastic is the account of the assassination of Alexander II. Every detail of the day of his assassination is known. His wife was waiting to go for a drive with the emperor when he was brought to the palace in a dying condition; only his children and brother, the Grand Duke Michael, were in the room when he breathed his last. The new czar did not drive back to his own palace with his wife in a closed carriage, "accompanied by a whole regiment of Don Cossacks," but returned in an open sledge with the empress and no escort at all. Grand Duke Alexander could have read in the newspapers of that year the exact happenings.

He states that Russia declared war against Turkey in January, 1877, when in reality it was on April 24, 1877. Just as inexact is the statement that the incident on the Afghan frontier which nearly led to a conflict between England and Russia, took place "less than a year after Alexander III's accession," whereas it occurred four years later, in 1885. That the new czar changed his ministers and announced a series of reforms "twenty-four hours after his father's funeral," is untrue; these changes took place four months after Alexander II's murder.

From these errors it will be seen that little importance can be attached to this record. In fact, the only truth I could find in this book was the assertion that Russia sacrificed herself to save France during the World War, and was rewarded only with ingratitude. All the rest is illusion and fairy tale.

CATHERINE RADZIWILL.

Educational Ideals and Practice

The Theory of Education in the United States, by Albert Jay Nock. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. \$2.00.

IN ORIGINALITY and freedom of thought, in pungency of expression, in depth of scholarship, and in purity of literary style, Mr. Nock possesses a synthesis of qualities which are perhaps unequaled by any living American. That he allows his brilliancy and freedom of thought sometimes to carry him to lengths which his masters, the Greeks, would not qualify as belonging to the perfect mean, is also true; which simply means that, aristocrat and classicist as Mr. Nock is, he is also a man of his time.

This little volume comprising the Page-Barbour Lectures delivered by Mr. Nock at the University of Virginia, is one of the most brilliant, provocative and disturbing books of recent years, and to the believer in the popular, which is also the official, theory of American education, it will cause indignation, even outrage. For Mr. Nock believes that theory to be both ridiculous and soul-destroying, definitely prohibiting any deep culture or disinterestedness of thought.

Mr. Nock disbelieves profoundly in the whole idea of education as it is preached and practised in secondary schools, in colleges and in universities. In fact he denies it is education or ever can become education. He does not damn it *per se*, for he believes it has its place, but that that place has nothing to do with education. As training for the average man it is undoubtedly excellent, but Mr. Nock declares that education and training are two very different things and that the average man is utterly incapable of education. He puts it thus: "The philosophical doctrine of equality gives no more ground for the assumption that all men are educable than it does for the assumption that all men are six feet tall. We see at once, then, that it is not the philosophical doctrine of equality, but an utterly untenable popular perversion of it, that we find at the basis of our educational system." This is Mr. Nock's thesis, and he expands it magnificently in this book!

After showing that originally American education was formed in the great tradition, the tradition which still obtains in Europe, Mr. Nock states that our educators speedily found that it did not work under the sanction of an equalitarian theory. But instead of acknowledging that education is possible only for the very few, our educators began tinkering with the system, despite the self-evident fact that "the great majority remain, we may say, in respect of mind and spirit, structurally immature; therefore no amount of exposure to the force of any kind of instruction or example can ever determine in them the views of life, or establish in them the demands on life, that are characteristic of maturity." And so finding that the real essentials of education are impossible of impartment to the many, the system was changed by giving the many only what they can grasp, which means a vast and appalling diluting of each subject. And Mr. Nock puts the result in no less appalling words: "Our system is engaged with the rubbish, because the theory of its operation requires it to be so engaged."

Mr. Nock's chief reason for believing in the old tradition, the classic education for the few, is that it only can make for the presence of a body of disinterested thought, thought which alone can solve the problems of any society. This thought, Mr. Nock asserts, is practically non-existent in America, and indeed under our theory of education, cannot exist. As he sees no hope of changing our theory, the picture he visualizes of the future of his countrymen is black indeed. It is here that many who will agree utterly with Mr. Nock's main thesis will part company with him. It is not that they are incorrigible optimists, not even perhaps that they are of the ineducable, but that the reading of history has taught them that no system exists forever, that revolutions, even bloodless revolutions of thought, are possible, and that not even the ideals of equality and democracy when applied wrongly are immutable. The thinker like the genius is not necessarily the product of any system; he may even be a product of a revolt against it. There are signs that even now such a revolt may be imminent.

GRENVILLE VERNON.

The Demise of Confidence

The United States in World Affairs, by Walter Lippmann and William O. Scroggs. New York: Harper and Brothers. \$2.50.

THERE is very little left for any reviewer to say about this Lippman-Scroggs world survey for 1931, after Thomas Woodlock's editorials in the *Wall Street Journal*.

If many of our "financial leaders" are capable of reading anything not printed on ticker tape, and if politicians read at all, this book may do a surprising lot of good. It is written as the first of a yearly series to be published by the Council on Foreign Relations, not as just another undigested record of current events, but as a true statesmen's yearbook. The authors do not claim for it any such imposing intention, but that is exactly what it is, covering the American political year of congressional session.

By the mere connected recital of events recorded through a particularly keen intelligence the interplay of economics, politics and diplomacy becomes self-evident. One is led to deduce from their showing that, even though candidates for the Presidency do feel that the strongest nationalist will make the best running in the impending campaign, the facts are all against any such hypothesis unless the runner also reads the signs. Formulae and slogans will not serve. The way out is clearly not through boosters nor political tinkers. A mere change of

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party will accomplish nothing. Confidence is rightly dead; posturing cheer leaders in politics, finance and religion have killed it. And that is a hard saying in this bicentennial year, in this America of ours which was intentionally designed to breed free men.

WILLIAM FRANKLIN SANDS.

The New Herder

Der Grosse Herder: Volume II: Ba-Ca. Freiburg, Germany, and St. Louis, Missouri: B. Herder Book Company. Price in advance for the set of 12 volumes: \$75.00.

THE COMMONWEAL has already noticed the first volume of the new Herder encyclopaedia and remarked, through its reviewer, upon the manifold excellences of a thoroughly up-to-date reference work which is Catholic and at the same time general. It remains to greet the second volume and to stress good qualities which are apparent to those of us who are only users of such books and in no sense makers of them.

First comes, I should say, the unusual merit of the typography and of the illustrative material. With characteristic German faith in the value of a picture, the editors have supplied brief photographs of many famous persons, living and dead, even when space requirements exacted a curtailment of text space in payment therefor. Still better is the wealth of art material—architectural, pictorial, plastic. The reproductions are often necessarily small, but they are invariably good. Finally the maps—of which there happen to be a considerable number in this volume—are first-rate, usable things. And there are splendid photographs which picture modern technical ingenuity.

These are really commendable books—as modern as the air we breathe, as Catholic as work of man can be, and as distinguished for breadth and accuracy as scholarship could desire. Anyone who expends the very reasonable amount charged will never regret the decision.

GEORGE N. SHUSTER.

Iliad and Odyssey

Did Homer Live?, by Victor Bérard; translated by Brian Rhys. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Incorporated. \$3.00.

BÉRARD, the late brilliant senator and scholar, has readably condensed the twenty volumes which he devoted to the study of the much-mooted Homeric question, in this summary which will appeal to all lovers of the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey." Unfortunately, however, his erudition, stripped here of footnotes and references, is apt to mislead the layman. Categorical statements, even though resulting from laborious research, may induce the reader to believe that, at last, all problems contingent upon the Homeric poems have been settled forever by Bérard; still, the veil of two millenaries surely never can be lifted from some of these questions.

Moreover, the title of the work does not do justice to its content. In proving the existence of a flesh-and-blood Homer, Bérard did little besides joining the host of German scholars who for a century have kept protesting against Wolff's and Lachmann's efforts to convert Homer into a myth. More significant are the parallels drawn between Egyptian, Chaldean and Phoenician traditions, and the tales of Homer. In the light of recent archaeological discoveries, the Odyssey appears as a depository of historic experiences of the Levant, woven into a harmonious pattern by a master poet who, in Bérard's conclusion, flourished about 850 B. C. in Miletus in Asia Minor.

ARPAD STEINER.

Briefer Mention

The Mad Stone, by Lorna Beers. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Incorporated. \$2.50.

MINNESOTA tradition furnishes the theme of this book: that a person bitten by a mad dog can be cured by the laying on of a Mad Stone, a stone which grows in the heart of a deer, and is found in only one in a generation. Perhaps, then, there is a psychologic mad stone which may draw out the poison from the soul and heal it. The best portion of this story, and the most significant, is its typical American background. Ollie Hackett, of the metropolis, who half melts into it before she gets away; Louis Ludlow, once a boy preacher, whose faith has gone under beneath the burden of too much knowledge and too little comprehensive mingling with life; Mattie, his wife, elementally bent on preserving and bettering her children's happiness; old McElroy, her father, whose inflexible will yields to love for his grandchild—all alike offer a clear-cut showing of what happens to love and life, to happiness and sorrow alike, when faith in something deeper and higher than mere physical living goes. With all their cleverness, their knowledge, it is not till understanding—the mind's Mad Stone—heals them that they become aware of life's values.

The Clairvoyant, by Ernst Lothar. New York: H. C. Kinsey and Company, Incorporated. \$2.50.

IT IS more difficult to classify this novel than to enjoy it. It combines enough sheer melodrama to make it really diverting, with enough sound satire and wholesome wisdom about moral realities to make the diversion a deeper thing than trivial entertainment. This in spite of the fact that its author himself views certain lapses with the tolerance we are accustomed (perhaps for want of a better word) to call "Continental." Sebastian Trux, a simple Thuringian country lad turned law clerk, discovers that he can foretell the future. He is taken up, first by society (personified, of course, by the balefully beautiful princess for whom Sebastian has conceived an infatuation), then by one of the chief engineers of world publicity. This last is a rich and meaty portrait. Sebastian's rise to an insane sort of fame, his satiety, the misery of his country conscience when he discovers that his gift sometimes plays him false, with tragic results to his clients, are effectively dramatized. The dénouement, which finds Sebastian back on the farm, is obvious enough, perhaps, as is the pattern contrast between the two women in his life—the princess and the country girl who has always loved him. But the author can tell his story, and read us his lesson, so ably that we forgive him.

1919, by John Dos Passos. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. \$2.50.

MR. DOS PASSOS is a brilliant practitioner of the unusual in fiction, and the impetus of his "attack" in each of his novels testifies to that sustained intensity which is part of the equipment of every serious artist. This present novel—a congeries of life stories, related only by their common focus in the war, and their varied disaster from it—is no exception. Unfortunately, it is no exception, either, to the double bane which vitiates all of Mr. Dos Passos's work. His view of human nature lacks any touch of tenderness or exaltation or merely human piety; and with a confused though lasting bitterness, he imputes the whole brutal business to the vices of capitalistic society. This impairs both his artistic importance and his otherwise fine devotion to the cause of the oppressed.

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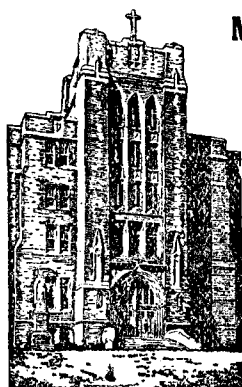
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Poems: 1914-1930, by Edmund Blunden. New York: Harper and Brothers. \$3.00.

THE COLLECTED poems of Edmund Blunden afford a very interesting sample of traditionalistic English verse since 1914. Here is an excellent romantic vocabulary, used with artistry which is firm despite its conscious aestheticism. It is uneven poetry, of course—no volume as large as this will show more than a relative amount of cream in the bottle. There are some masterly rural pieces, among them a few brook lyrics (notably "Perch Fishing" and "The Pasture Pond") which seem destined for anthological immortality. Some of these poems have reminded critics of Keats, and there is a resemblance not entirely in the older poet's favor. By comparison the war verse leaves the present reviewer a bit cold. The best quality of the book as a whole is an admirable serenity. This, enlivened by wit and human interest, is never dullness. It is simply the product of the English country spirit, which has often achieved excellence in art and will doubtless continue to do so.

Spenser and the Table Round, by Charles Bowie Millican. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press. \$2.50.

PROFESSOR MILLICAN succeeds in throwing much light on the status of the Arthurian legend in Elizabethan England. The kernel of his discourse is contained, perhaps, in the following sentence: "The profound political significance of basing on the conquests of Arthur of Britain England's claims, not only for a united Great Britain including Ireland but also for an empire extending across the seas, was enhanced by the very presence of a Welsh Queen 'who came from *Arthurs* rase and lyne.'" Thus nationalistic feeling is envisaged as determining Spenser's attitude toward and use of the legendary material. A final chapter sets the findings against the background of Spenserian criticism. The voluminous notes are valuable. This is Volume VIII of "Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature."

The Life of the Butterfly, by Friedrich Schnack; translated by Winifred Katzin. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. \$2.50.

THIS book is by no means just another bit of nature lore. Nothing in it has been rehashed, all is the fruit of a good poet's careful study of a winged tribe which has been too lightly used as a symbol for the flightiness of mankind. Friedrich Schnack is an artist, and the publishers are right in comparing him to Hudson. There is the same familiarity with individuals and species, the same ability to make what is intrinsically only a catalogue an epic of nature's beauty and vitality. Perhaps the vitality is stressed a little too much for American tastes. This is German writing, which has been carefully done into English.

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